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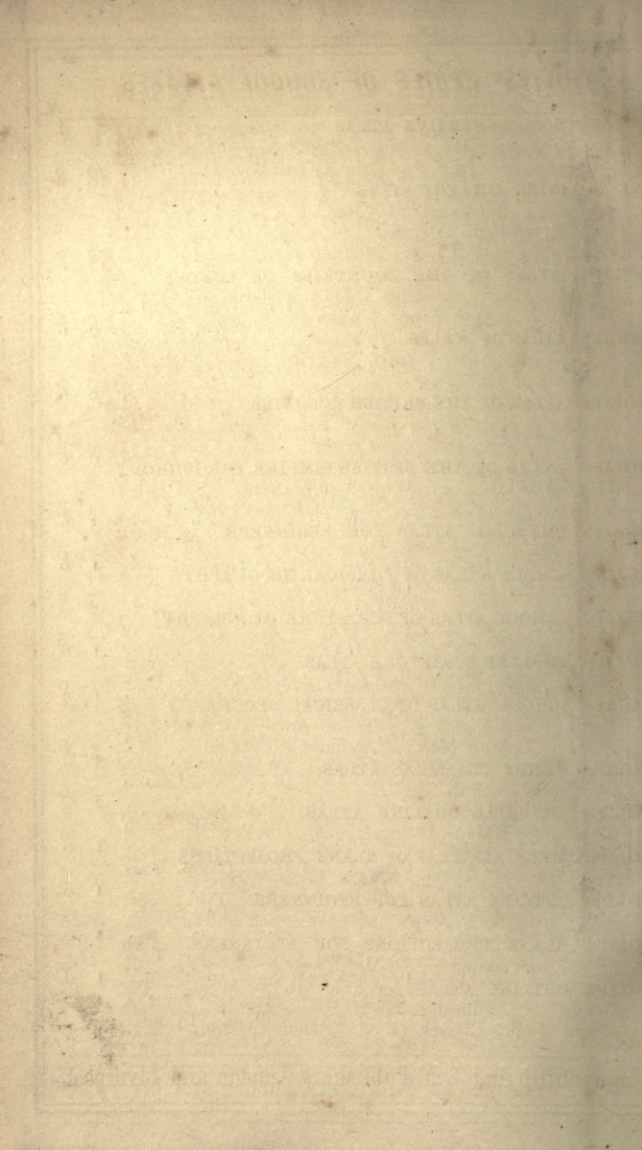
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NOTES ON I. SAMUEL.

BY

J. DAVIES,

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON,

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the Church Catechism, and the Book of Common Prayer; and
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49 & 51, SOUTH CASTLE STREET.

Rev. S. Rudnitzky
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NOTES ON I. SAMUEL.

I. and II. Samuel make in the Jewish Canon but one book,—bearing the prophet's name. The division of the work originated in the Septuagint and Vulgate versions, in which the two parts are called I. and II. Kings.

The *authorship* of Samuel is pretty clearly indicated in I. Chron. xxix, 29,—“Now the acts of David the king, first and last, behold, they are written in *the book of Samuel the seer*, and in *the book of Nathan the prophet*, and in *the book of Gad the seer*.” It is generally supposed that Nathan, who lived on into Solomon's reign, compiled the work from three sources:—

1. The national annals kept by the scribes.
2. The special records of contemporary events written by Samuel, Gad, and himself.

As Samuel's death is the first thing mentioned in I. Sam. xxv., we must limit his share in the narrative to cs. i.-xxiv. of that book.

3. Some collection of Hebrew poetry,—whence were taken, in I. Samuel, Hannah's Song, and the Chorus sung by the women in celebration of David's valour.

The *title* of the work may have been bestowed—

1. Because Samuel was the most distinguished of the writers contributing to it, or
2. Because he had so much to do with the most prominent persons and events in the book, especially with regard to the change of government.

The *date* of the compilation of Samuel is not known; it must, however, have been written in its present form before the death of David, since it does not narrate that event.

I. Samuel *extends* from Samuel's birth, 1171 B.C., to Saul's death, 1056 B.C.

It admits of *three divisions*:—

- I. Portion of Eli's judgeship.
- II. Samuel's judgeship.
- III. The reign of Saul, which ended the *Federative Republic*, and commenced the *Single Monarchy*.

PART I.

Portion of Eli's Judgeship.

Eli was Judge and high-priest; his judgeship extended from B.C. 1181 to 1141, and embraced South and South-West Palestine.

He was contemporary with Jair and Jephthah, and during his days the part of the country under his rule was under oppression by the Philistines, a fresh and large immigration of whom is supposed to have occurred at this time, and to have given that strength to the nation which enabled it so long to harass the Israelites.

The high-priesthood belonged to the family of Eleazar, Aaron's third son; Eli was descended from Ithamar, Aaron's youngest son, so that there was, in his case, a transfer of the office from its proper representatives. The reason of this change is not known; but it is supposed most probable that the legal heir to the dignity was too young to occupy it.

CHAPTER I.

Samuel's Parentage, Birth, and Dedication.

v. 1. "*A certain man.*" We learn from I. Chron. vi, 22, 23, that Elkanah was a Levite, of the family of Kohath.

"*Ramathaim-Zophim,*"—is called *Ramah* in v. 19, and elsewhere. It was the birthplace, usual abode, and burial-place of Samuel. Its site is a very disputed point,—the weight of evidence seeming to be, however, in favour of the modern *Soba*, west of Jerusalem.

Ramathaim = *double eminence*,—the place being, probably, built on the sides of two hills.

It is called *Ramathaim-Zophim* to indicate that it was inhabited by the Levitical family of the Zophites, so named after Zuph, the great-great-grandfather of Elkanah.

v. 3. "*Went up out of his city yearly.*" All the Jewish males were commanded to appear before the Lord *three* times in the course of the year. The words of the text, as they stand, convey the impression that Elkanah went to Shiloh only *once* a year, and, when it is remembered how lax the observance of the Law had become during the time of the Judges, no surprise need be felt if such were the case. However, the word translated "*yearly*" will bear the construction "*at stated times*,"—so that it is not out of the question that he was in the habit of being present at *all* the three great annual festivals.

"*Shiloh*,"—where the Tabernacle was.

vs. 4 and 5. The sacrifices made would be *Peace-offerings*. Of these there were three descriptions,—the Thank-offering, the Freewill-offering, and the Vow. The animal offered might be taken from the herd or the flock, might be either male or female, and must be accompanied by a meat-offering.

The victim was brought to the Brazen Altar,—the offerer laid his hands on its head, and slew it,—the priest sprinkled the blood on the altar, divided the animal, burnt on the altar the caul, the great lobe of the liver, the kidneys with their fat, and, if the victim were a sheep, the fat of the tail. He then cut out the right shoulder and breast, waved them before the Lord, and took them as his own portion,—and returned the rest of the sacrifice to the offerer, who, with his family, provided they were ceremonially clean, feasted together on it. If the sacrifice were a Thank-offering, the feast must be on the same day, and any flesh remaining on the morrow must be burned; in the case of a Freewill offering, or a Vow, the festivities might last two days, and the remnant must be burned on the third day.

This *Sacrificial Feast* was a season of great rejoicing. It was intended to intimate that, by the preceding sacrifices, full atonement had been made for the sin that had separated between God and the offerer, and that the latter was now welcomed to the table of Jehovah.

When the parts of the animal to be eaten by him and his were restored to him by the priest, Elkanah evidently

divided them amongst his wives and children, giving to Hannah, however, more than justly fell to her share.

v. 6. "*Her adversary*,"—Peninnah.

v. 9. "*After they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drunk*,"—i.e., after the sacrificial feast on their portion of the offering.

v. 11. "*I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head.*" As a Levite, Samuel was by birth bound to service in connection with the Tabernacle. His mother's dedication made this service constant and life-long, and, in addition, laid upon him the Nazarite vow.

Nazarite = separated. Nazarites were so either for life, (like Samuel, Samson, and John the Baptist), or for a certain period. While their vow was upon them they must not—

1. Take wine or strong drink, grapes, or anything made from the vine.
2. Cut their hair.
3. Touch a corpse.

In case of a temporary dedication, as soon as the period had elapsed, the Nazarite offered a burnt-offering, a sin-offering, and a peace-offering, together with a meat-offering and a drink-offering; and his hair was cut off, and burned under the peace-offering.

v. 13. "*Thought she had been drunken.*" He imagined she had been indulging too freely at the sacrificial feast. It seems to have been customary to utter vows and prayers aloud before the priest; hence Hannah's lips moving without voice seemed to Eli to be a drunken attempt at utterance.

v. 16. "*A daughter of Belial*" = a wicked woman.

v. 20. "*Samuel*" = *Heard of God.*

v. 22. "*Hannah went not up.*" Females were not obliged to attend the three great annual festivals; but the devout amongst them seem to have been in the habit of doing so. Thus we find Mary, the mother of Jesus, going up to Jerusalem with her husband and child.

v. 23. "*Establish his word*,"—should be, "*complete his work*,"—i.e., accept the child as his servant, according to his dedication.

v. 24. "*Three bullocks*,"—in the Septuagint is "a

bullock of three years old," which seems correct, since only one bullock is mentioned as having been offered, (*vid.* v. 25).

"*Ephah*,"—3 pecks, 3 pints.

"*Bottle*,"—of skin.

v. 28. "*Sent*,"—should be, "*returned*."

CHAPTER II.

Hannah's Song of Thanksgiving.—The Sins of Eli's Sons.—Samuel ministers in the Tabernacle, and is visited by his parents.—Hannah's family.—Eli remonstrates with his Sons.—A prophet is sent to foretell God's judgments upon his House.

v. 1. "*Prayed*." The word *prayer* is frequently applied to any act of devotional worship, whether consisting of petition and praise conjoined, or of either separately.

"*Mine horn is exalted*." The horn was the symbol of power and glory.

v. 5. "*Seven*,"—*i.e.*, a large number.

v. 10. "*His king*,"—refers to David and Christ.

"*Anointed*,"—should rather be, "*Messiah*." This is the first time that the name is employed in Scripture. It refers here to both David and Christ.

The Song of Hannah is very similar to the *Magnificat*,—

"My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden; for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name. And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation. He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away. He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy; as he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever." (Luke i, 46-55.)

From a comparison of the two Thanksgivings, it seems

clear that Mary borrowed much of the language of her ode from that of Hannah.

v. 11. "*The child did minister.*" Levites did not enter upon the exercise of their ministry till the age of thirty; but Samuel being specially dedicated to God, was, from the time of his coming to Shiloh, occupied with such duties in connection with the Tabernacle as were suitable to his age. From what we read hereafter it would seem that he was chiefly engaged in personal attendance upon Eli.

vs. 13 and 14. "*The priest's servant came, while the flesh was in seething, with a flesh-hook of three teeth in his hand; and he struck it into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; all that the flesh-hook brought up the priest took for himself.*"

The priests' portion of the peace-offerings consisted of the right shoulder and breast. Eli's sons were not content with this; but, while the part of the sacrifice belonging to the offerers, and which had been restored to them, was cooking, used to send the Levites to obtain extra and unauthorized perquisites, in the manner narrated in the text.

v. 15. "*Before they burnt the fat,*"—i.e., before even the sacrifice had been offered on the altar.

"*Give flesh to roast for the priest.*" This demand was made for a twofold reason,—

1. They could thus make sure of the choicest portions of the animal, whereas when they waited till the meat was being boiled, it was a matter of chance what kind of pieces the flesh-hook fished out.
2. They preferred roast meat to boiled,—like all Orientals.

v. 18. "*Ephod,*"—from *aphad*=to tie,—because fastened by a girdle.

There were two kinds of ephod :—

1. *The ephod peculiar to the high priest*,—a close robe, reaching from the shoulders to the loins,—made of fine-twined linen, gorgeously embroidered with blue, purple, scarlet, and strips of gold (sewn on). On the shoulder-pieces, set in golden sockets, were two onyx stones, bearing the names of the twelve tribes,—six on each stone.
2. *The ephod of the ordinary priests and Levites*,—a tunic of plain linen, like Samuel's.

These were not at first worn by them, but they gradually adopted their use.

v. 26. So it is said of Christ, "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." (Luke ii, 52).

v. 27. "*Thy father*,"—Aaron.

v. 28. "*All the offerings made by fire*." The priests' perquisites from the sacrifices were—

1. The flesh of sin- and trespass- offerings.
2. The remnant of meat-offerings.
3. The breast and shoulder of peace-offerings.
4. The shoulder, cheeks, and maw of every ox and sheep sacrificed.
5. The flesh of irredeemable firstlings.
6. The skins of the animals sacrificed as burnt-offerings.

v. 29. "*Honourest thy sons above me*,"—by preferring their safety and enjoyment to God's glory.

v. 31. "*I will cut off the arm of thy father's house*." This was fulfilled in the terrible slaughter of the priests by Saul, (see c. xxii, 17-20).

"*There shall not be an old man in thine house*." Age is so highly honoured in the East, that a family is looked upon with the greatest pity and contempt if none of its members attain senility. Hence no more terrible punishment than that denounced upon Eli could have been conceived, while it was eminently appropriate to the offence, since Eli's sin had been committed in old age.

v. 34. "*In one day they shall die both of them*,"—see c. iv, 1-11.

v. 35. "*A faithful priest*,"—Zadok.

At Solomon's accession Abiathar joined in a conspiracy against him with Joab and Adonijah to place the last-named on the throne. For this act of treason Solomon deposed him from office,—

"And unto Abiathar the priest said the king, Get thee to Anathoth, unto thine own fields; for thou art worthy of death: but I will not at this time put thee to death, because thou barest the ark of the Lord God before David my father, and because thou hast been afflicted in all wherein my father was afflicted. So Solomon thrust out Abiathar from being priest unto the Lord; that he might fulfil the word of the Lord, which he spake concerning the house of Eli in Shiloh." (1 Kings ii, 26, 27).

To Abiathar's place Solomon promoted Zadok,—the high-priesthood thus returning to the line of Eleazar, (to which Zadok belonged).

"*He shall walk before my anointed for ever.*" Zadok and his descendants held the high-priesthood till the captivity, and aided the pious kings in the promotion of true religion,—thus "walking before" God's "anointed."

CHAPTER III.

God reveals himself by night to Samuel for the first time, and denounces his judgments on the house of Eli.—Samuel delivers the message to Eli,—receives regular prophetic revelations.

At the time of the first revelation of God to Samuel, narrated in this chapter, Josephus says that he was twelve years old.

v. 1. "*The word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision.*" Owing to the sins of Eli's sons, and his own neglect to inflict punishment upon them, Jehovah had ceased to reveal His will, as He had been in the habit of doing, through the priesthood, excepting on such rare occasions as to make the word of the Lord "precious."

v. 2. "*His place.*" Of course, Eli did not sleep in the Tabernacle; doubtless there were erected in its neighbourhood, at a respectful distance, the buildings requisite for the accommodation of those engaged in its services.

v. 3. "*The lamp of God,*"—the seven-branched Golden Candlestick, which alone gave light within the Tabernacle.

"*Went out,*"—should rather be, "*went down,*"—i.e., grew dim. The light in the Candlestick was never allowed to go out. The lamps were trimmed every morning, towards which time they would of course become somewhat dim; accordingly we may infer that it was near daybreak when Jehovah revealed Himself to Samuel.

v. 5. "*He ran unto Eli.*" Samuel's sleeping within call of Eli, and hastening to him directly he heard him call,

seem to show that his duty consisted chiefly in personal attendance upon the high-priest.

v. 7. "*Did not yet know the Lord*,"—i.e., did not know by *experience* the manner in which God was accustomed to reveal Himself to His prophets.

v. 10. "*Stood*." It would hence appear that there was a visible appearance, as well as the Voice.

"*Other times*,"—should be, "*the other times*."

"*Speak*." Eli had instructed him to say, "*Speak Lord*;" but he omits the word *Lord*, probably through the confusion into which the strange circumstances in which he found himself had thrown him.

v. 14. "*The iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever*." This does not mean that none of the sins of Eli's posterity should ever be pardoned; but that no amount of sacrifice should avail to avert the doom already denounced, or cause God to revoke His purpose of depriving Eli's family of the high-priesthood.

v. 15. "*The doors of the house of the Lord*,"—the entrance to the Court of the Tabernacle, consisting of a moveable curtain of fine-twined linen, embroidered with blue, purple, and scarlet. It could be drawn up, (or pulled aside), by means of cords.

v. 20. "*Dan*,"—Dan-Laish.

"*From Dan even to Beer-Sheba*,"—i.e., from one end of the country to the other, Dan being one of the northernmost towns of Palestine, and Beer-Sheba one of the southernmost.

CHAPTER IV.

The Israelites go forth to battle against the Philistines,—are defeated,—and send for the Ark. The Philistines are terrified, but are again victorious. The Ark is taken,—and Hophni and Phinehas are slain. Eli, on hearing the evil news, falls, and breaks his neck. The birth of Ichabod, B.C. 1141.

v. 1. "*The Philistines*" had been for twenty years oppressing Southern and South-Western Palestine. Just

at this time they seem to have been unusually aggressive and troublesome, and at this point Samson comes upon the scene, and, in the S.W. of the country, began that twenty years' opposition to them, which ended in the comprehensive slaughter made at his death.

"*Eben-Ezer*" = *stone of help*. It is so called here by anticipation. The name was not given to the spot until Samuel set up a stone there to commemorate a victory over the Philistines, (*vid. c. vii, 11, 12*). It was situated on the Northern border of Judah.

"*Aphék*,"—Aphékah, one of the towns in the central "mountains" of Judah mentioned in Joshua. It must have been in the Northern border of Judah.

v. 3. "*Let us fetch the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord out of Shiloh unto us, that, when it cometh among us, it may save us out of the hand of our enemies.*" Two ideas, both equally mischievous, seem to have actuated them in this proposal:—

1. They remembered how God had often (*e.g.*, in the cases of crossing the Jordan and taking Jericho) ordered the Ark to be carried before the people as the token of His presence, and that marvellous results had accompanied the sacred symbol. They considered, therefore, that like consequences would ensue in the present case. They forgot, however, that on those occasions God Himself had given the command, that the Ark had been borne by holy priests, and that the people were willing and obedient,—whereas, in the present instance, God's will had not been consulted, the bearers were Hophni and Phinehas, "sons of Belial" devoted to destruction, and the people, instead of being faithful to the Covenant, were suffering at the hands of the Philistines for their backsliding and idolatry.
2. They had become infected with the notions of the heathen around them that deities were powerful only in certain places, where their images or the symbols of their presence were for the time. Consequently, they vainly imagined that if the Ark were in the field, Jehovah must be there too, and that to aid them.

v. 4. "*The Ark of the Covenant*,"—so called because con-

taining the Tables of the Law, upon which were inscribed the terms of God's Covenant with the Israelites.

"*Which dwelleth between the cherubims.*" This expression is frequently employed by the sacred writers. It arose from the fact that the Shechinah, the symbol of the Divine presence, occupied the space intervening between the cherubim placed at each end of the Mercy-seat.

It would appear that Hophni and Phinehas must have entered the Holy of Holies, and taken the Ark thence. This was an act of awful profanation, for only the High-priest was ever allowed to pass the threshold of the Holiest of All, and that only once a year, on the Great Day of Atonement.

v. 7. "*The Philistines were afraid.*" They did not, of course, believe that Jehovah was the only living and true God; but they believed him to be a powerful deity, and, seeing the token of his presence on the battle-field, imagined that he would undoubtedly be peculiarly present. Yet they did not decline the encounter, for they cherished the hope that the gods in whom they relied might prove themselves mightier than he upon this occasion.

v. 8. "*These are the gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness.*" The Philistines' knowledge of past events was evidently vague, since they here muddle together the judgments inflicted upon the Egyptians and those with which the enemies of the Israelites were visited during their wanderings.

v. 12. "*Earth,*"—dust.

v. 13. "*A seat.*" The original signifies a seat such as was used by only high and dignified personages. It was, probably, a sacerdotal throne.

"*By the wayside.*" From v. 18 it seems that he was sitting by the gate, *i.e.*, the entrance of the Tabernacle. It seems most probable that he was sitting on the same place where he was when he saw Hannah praying.

v. 18. "*Fell from off the seat backward.*" The seat which Eli occupied was, if we may judge from models of the period, high-backed and armed. It would hence be next to impossible for him literally to fall over the back of the throne. Most likely, he gave a sudden start which threw his weight backwards, and overbalanced the chair, so that it fell, and he with it.

v. 21. "*Ichabod*" = *Where is the glory?*

v. 22. "*The glory is departed from Israel*,"—since God's presence, of which the Ark was the token, had been removed.

The Ark was never restored to the Tabernacle, which itself was removed from Shiloh, and the place visited by God's heaviest judgments:—

"They provoked him to anger with their high places, and moved him to jealousy with their graven images. When God heard this, he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel; so that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which he placed among men; and delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory into the enemy's hand. He gave his people over also unto the sword; and was wroth with his inheritance. The fire consumed their young men; and their maidens were not given to marriage. Their priests fell by the sword; and their widows made no lamentation." (Ps. lxxviii, 58-64.)

"Go ye now unto my place which was in Shiloh, where I set my name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people Israel." (Jer. vii, 12.)

When these calamities came upon the place we have no means of deciding; but it is generally thought that they immediately followed this terrible defeat, and were inflicted by the Philistines.

The Tabernacle we find some time after at Nob, (see c. xxi. 1-6); in the time of David and Solomon it was at Gibeon, (see 1 Chron. xvi, 39; xxi, 29). After the new Tabernacle had been constructed at Jerusalem, and the Ark removed thither, the old building, which retained only the Brazen Altar, became associated with the rites of the high-places, and appears gradually to have silently passed out of existence, since nothing is recorded of its final fate.

Eli seems to have been succeeded in the high-priesthood by Ahitub, a son of Phinehas, while the judgeship devolved upon Samuel.

Eli must have been himself a religious man; but his piety was marred by an easy disposition, which he criminally allowed to prevent his exercising condign punishment upon his ungodly sons.

Samuel's Judgeship. (B.C. 1141—1095).

Samuel judged, apparently, all Israel,—though the more immediate scene of the exercise of his functions was in the South of the country.

He was contemporary with Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon, East of Jordan, and with Samson in S.W. Canaan.

Towards the end of his judgeship he was assisted by his sons as deputies.

The Philistines continued to oppress Israel till twenty years after the accession of Samuel to power, when such a decisive victory was gained over them that they remained enfeebled and quiet for a number of years.

CHAPTER V.

The Ark is taken to Ashdod, and placed in the Temple of Dagon. Dagon falls on the ground before it, and is broken to pieces. The men of Ashdod are plagued on account of their possession of the Ark, as are also those of Gath and Ekron, to which places it is successively taken.

v. 1. "*Ashdod*" = *the mighty*,—one of the five *lordships* or confederacies of the Philistines,—the others being Gath, Gaza, Ekron, and Ashkelon. It appears to have been the strongest of the Philistine cities. It was taken by Uzziiah, king of Judah, who destroyed its fortifications. Its walls were soon afterwards rebuilt, for we find the Assyrians and Egyptians repeatedly besieging it. Psammetichus, according to Herodotus, invested it *for twenty-eight years*, (in the reign of Manasseh, king of Judah). The city was destroyed by Jonathan, the Jewish prince, brother of Judas Maccabæus; but was rebuilt under the Romans, and became the seat of a bishopric. It still stands,—a small and unimportant town.

v. 2. "*Brought it into the house of Dagon*,"—either as a triumphal offering to the god, or with a view to worship it in conjunction with Dagon.

"*Dagon*,"—the tutelary god of the Philistines. He was represented with the bust of a man and the extremities of a fish.

The name is derived from the Hebrew *dag* = *a fish*, though some deduce it from *dagan* = *corn*.

Fish-deities were common amongst the Syro-Arabians,—*e.g.*, there was the Atargatis of the Syrians. The union of the human and the piscine forms may be accounted for on the ground that Dagon, and other deities represented under like forms, were intended as images of deified benefactors who in remote ages had come from beyond seas, or risen out of lakes and rivers, to teach the inhabitants of the countries agriculture and the arts of civilization. The Babylonians had a tradition of such a being, called Oannes, rising from the Erythræan Sea at the very commencement of their history; he was said to have been succeeded at intervals by others of the same description, the last being called Odakōn, whom Selden identifies with Dagon.

It was in honour of Dagon that the festival was held at Gaza, when Samson performed his last and comprehensively fatal feat of strength. In his temple, too, they fastened Saul's head, after his death.

v. 4. "*The threshold.*" As prostration at the threshold indicates in the East the profoundest awe and respect for the person within, no greater humiliation could be put upon the Philistines' god, than to cause him to fall on the threshold of the house wherein was the Ark.

"*Only the stump of Dagon was left to him.*" "The stump of" is not in the original, and should be omitted, so as to read, "Only Dagon, (*i.e.*, the fish-part of the idol), was left to him."

CHAPTER VI.

After being seven months amongst them, the Philistines determine to send back the Ark, with a Trespass-offering.—They send it on a new cart drawn by two kine, and accompanied with five golden emerods, and the same number of golden mice.—The kine take the way to Beth-Shemesh of their own accord.—The men of Beth-Shemesh rejoice and offer sacrifices; but a number of them are slain for looking into the Ark.—They

send to the inhabitants of Kirjath-Jearim to remove it to their city.

v. 4. "*Trespass-offering.*" The Philistines' intercourse with the Israelites had given them some insight into their worship, as the use of the term in the text seems to indicate. Or it may signify nothing more than an offering such as they themselves made, when they wished to appease a deity whom they supposed to be enraged with them.

"*Mice,*"—either the Jerboa or the short-tailed field-mouse, the latter of which is fearfully destructive in its ravages amongst the crops. It would appear from images of these animals being sent, as well as those of the emerods, that the harvests of the Philistines must have been attacked by swarms of these animals.. Two reasons for this additional plague have been suggested,—

1. That the Philistines, finding themselves smitten in every place to which the Ark was carried, at last placed it in the open fields.
2. That Dagon was looked upon as specially protecting the crops of the earth from all ravages, and that, consequently, the mice were sent as a proof, additional to the destruction of his image, that he was completely powerless.

"*Five golden emerods and five golden mice.*" It was customary amongst heathen nations to offer to their gods images of the diseases from which they had been, or hoped to be, cured, and also of any plagues from which they had been, or desired to be, delivered. The temple of Æsculapius, particularly, was full of such metal figures. The idea is supposed to have been derived from Moses having made a brazen serpent, which was afterwards preserved, apparently in the Sanctuary. The practice became widely extended, until representations of anything and everything from which deliverance had been obtained, or success in the use of which was desired, were offered. Slaves when freed would present their chains,—hunters would offer arrows to commemorate past deeds in the chase, or to ensure future prey. The practice is still largely prevalent in India, where a traveller has seen a still and a pair of bellows offered by a man about to distil arrack!

v. 9. "*Beth-Shemesh*" = *house of the Sun*,—on the Northern borders of Judah Westward. It is named *Ir-*

Shemesh in Joshua. Probably the Canaanitish inhabitants had formerly worshipped the Sun here.

v. 12. "*The kine took the straight way to the way of Beth-Shemesh, and went along the highway, lowing as they went, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left.*" This was a most marvellous proof of God's power, vouchsafed to the presumptuous Philistines in vindication of his glory. The calves of the two kine were locked up at home, and the animals lowed in sorrow at the parting as they went along,—yet, though their longings were evidently intense to return to their young, the hand of Jehovah upon them controlled their strong instincts, and compelled them, spite of themselves, to keep a straight and steady course to Beth-Shemesh.

v. 13. "*Wheat-harvest.*" This would be about the beginning of June.

v. 14. "*Offered the kine a burnt-offering unto the Lord.*" Kine were not proper for a burnt-offering, neither might sacrifices be offered anywhere excepting on the Brazen Altar of the Tabernacle, but the circumstances of the case completely justified the infraction of the Law, for

1. The fact that the cart and the kine had been engaged in such a service sanctified them, so that it would have been improper ever to have employed them again for any common use.
2. The Ark was no longer at Shiloh, and, perhaps, the whole establishment had been already broken up. Thus God no longer dwelt in any particular spot where alone sacrifices must be presented.

v. 15. "*The Levites.*" Beth-Shemesh was one of the Levitical priestly cities. Consequently there were priests present, who, doubtless, offered the sacrifices.

v. 17. "*Ekron*"—was celebrated for the worship of Baal-Zebub, the mosquito-god, (see 2 Kings; i, 2).

v. 18. "*The great stone of Abel.*" "*Stone of*" is not in the original, and *Abel* should be *Aben*=*a stone*. Thus, we should read, "*The great stone.*" *Abel*, however, means *weeping*, and if we read, "*The great stone of weeping,*" we obtain an applicable version, for the stone might be so named in consequence of the lamentation consequent upon the slaughter of the Bethshemites.

v. 19. "*They had looked into the Ark of the Lord.*" So sacred was the Ark, that not only might no one touch it,

(excepting of course the high-priest when specially directed or obliged to do so), but before the Kohathites, whose business it ordinarily was to bear it, were allowed to approach it, it was covered from their sight by a veil placed over it by the priests. Afterwards, when the Ark was being removed from Kirjath-Jearim, Uzzah was smitten for merely placing his hand upon it to steady it,—

“David gathered together all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand. And David arose, and went with all the people that were with him from Baale of Judah, to bring up from thence the ark of God, whose name is called by the name of the Lord of hosts that dwelleth between the cherubims. And they set the ark of God upon a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab that was in Gibeah: and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drave the new cart. And they brought it out of the house of Abinadab which was at Gibeah, accompanying the ark of God: and Ahio went before the ark. And David and all the house of Israel played before the Lord on all manner of instruments made of fir wood, even on harps, and on psalteries, and on timbrels, and on cornets, and on cymbals. And when they came to Nachon's threshing-floor, Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook it. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God.” (2 Sam. vi, 1-7).

“*Fifty thousand and threescore and ten men.*” There must be some mistake here, for—

1. It is utterly impossible that there could have been so many inhabitants in Beth-Shean.
2. Even granting the population to have been large enough to supply such a number, it is unreasonable to suppose that 50,070 were concerned in the profane act,—and it is certain that only those actually guilty would be smitten.

Various explanations have been offered of the difficulty. Josephus says only seventy were slain; the Arabic and Syriac versions give five thousand.

The number given by Josephus appears to be correct, for, the original is, “*Of the people seventy men, fifty thousand men.*” Now this is the only case in which the less numeral is placed before the greater;—consequently we may regard “*fifty thousand men*” as an accidental interpolation.

v. 21. "*Kirjath-Jearim*" = *the fields of the wood*.

"*Come ye down*,"—hence Beth-Shemesh must have been in a valley, and Kirjath-Jearim amongst the hills, which was actually the case,—this being one of those minute, but powerful, corroborations of the truth of the Scripture narrative that are constantly cropping up.

Kirjath-Jearim lay in the direct road from Beth-Shemesh to Shiloh; hence it was natural that the men of the latter place should send to those of the former, in preference to any others, to remove the Ark, since they supposed it would be restored to its former resting-place in the Tabernacle at Shiloh.

CHAPTER VII.

The men of Kirjath-Jearim fetch the Ark and place it in the house of Abinadab. Twenty years after, (B.C. 1120), Samuel assembles the people at Mizpeh, where they repent, and humble themselves. The Philistines prepare to attack the Israelites thus congregated. Samuel sacrifices and prays. God discomfits the Philistines, who are pursued and smitten by the Israelites. Samuel sets up Eben-Ezer. The Philistines and Amorites reduced to submission. Samuel's circuits.

v. 1. "*Abinadab*,"—was doubtless a Levite.

"*Sanctified*" = consecrated.

v. 2. "*For it was twenty years*." The reason that the Ark was not conveyed right on to Shiloh is probably to be found in the supposition before expressed that that place was desolated very soon after the capture of the sacred coffer by the Philistines. It remained at Kirjath-Jearim until David removed it at the beginning of his reign over all Israel. This makes the period of its stay at this place *ninety-eight years,—not twenty!* We must understand the date given, then, not as including the time from the

restoration of the Ark by the Philistines to its removal by David, but as indicating the interval between the placing of the Ark in Abinadab's house and the events following, viz.,—the solemn assembly of the people at Mizpeh, and their victory over the Philistines.

There is an allusion to this removal of the Ark in Ps. cxxxii, written by David to celebrate its transference to Jerusalem :—

“Lord, remember David, and all his afflictions: how he swore unto the Lord, and vowed unto the mighty God of Jacob; Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed; I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids, until I find out a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob. Lo, we heard of it at Ephratah: we found it in *the fields of the wood*, (should be *Kirjath-Jearim*). We will go into his tabernacles: we will worship at his footstool. Arise, O Lord, into thy rest; thou, and the ark of thy strength. Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness; and let thy saints shout for joy.” (Ps. cxxxii, 1-9).

Subsequent history of the Ark.—It remained at Kirjath-Jearim till B.C. 1042, when David removed it with a view to placing it in the Tabernacle which he had erected for it at Jerusalem. In consequence, however, of Uzzah's being struck dead for touching it, David would proceed no further, but housed it with Obed-Edom, with whom it remained for three months, at the end of which time David, hearing how the house of Obed-Edom had been blessed by its presence, fetched it thence, and had it conveyed amidst great rejoicings to the new Tabernacle at Jerusalem.

When David fled from Absalom he took the Ark with him.

It was placed in the Holy of Holies in Solomon's Temple, where it remained till the Sanctuary was polluted by the presence of idols: the priests then carried it from place to place to preserve it from profanation.

Josiah replaced it in the Temple.

It was lost sight of at the Destruction of the Temple by Nebuchadnezzar, and was wanting in the Second Temple. The Jews, however, believe that it still exists.

v. 3. “*And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel.*” This was twenty years after Eli's death, and we have no particulars given us of Samuel's career in the meantime.

Some authorities believe that it was not until now that he entered on his judgeship; but this is not the opinion of the majority of writers. Doubtless Samuel had, in the interval, exercised his functions in a quiet, steady way, and nothing occurred in connection with him that called for special record. The attention of the Israelites would be absorbed by the marvellous deeds of Samson, whose judgeship over S. W. Canaan ended in his tragic death the very year in which Samuel comes prominently forward. It would almost seem as if the death of the great hero were the reason for Samuel's calling the assembly at Mizpeh. For the last twenty years the centre and South of the land had, doubtless, been unmolested by the Philistines, who found enough to do in coping with their Herculean enemy. But now that he was dead, there was nothing to prevent them pushing further into the country, and Samuel, seeing the people's alarm and genuine desire after God, called an assembly at Mizpeh with a view, after solemn repentance and humiliation, of preparing to meet the inroads of their enemies.

v. 4. "*Baalim*" = *lords*. It is the plural masculine of *Baal*, and is used to indicate false *male gods generally*.

Baal was the chief male deity of the Phœnicians, and seems to have been the same as *the Sun*.

"*Ashtaroth*,"—the plural of *Ashtoreth*,—here means *female deities generally*.

Ashtoreth, (or *Astarte*), was the chief female Phœnician and Philistine deity, and seems to have been the same as *the Moon*. She corresponded to the Grecian *Venus*.

v. 5. "*Mizpeh*,"—of Benjamin.

v. 6. "*Drew water and poured it out before the Lord*." There is considerable difficulty in understanding the significance of this act. No such ceremony is to be found in the Law. Libations of water frequently accompanied solemn ceremonies amongst heathen nations; but only wine and blood are prescribed in the Law for the purpose. The act may have been meant to symbolize

1. The tears and lamentations of the people poured out before God.
2. Their purification from the sins of which they were now repenting.
3. The irrevocable character of the vows that had gone forth from their lips, which were "as water

spilt on the ground which cannot be gathered up again."

Or it may have been merely intended to purify the ground on which the altar was to be built.

"*Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpeh.*" Samuel is supposed to have been elected by the general voice of the people at this time to the office which he had hitherto filled by tacit consent.

v. 7. "*When the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together to Mizpeh, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel.*" The Philistines, misunderstanding the character of this vast congregation, appear to have imagined that the Israelites had assembled to concert an attack upon them, and, therefore, determined to anticipate them in their supposed design.

v. 10. "*The Lord thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines.*" Josephus says the thunder-storm was accompanied by a violent earthquake.

v. 11. "*The men of Israel went out of Mizpeh, and pursued the Philistines, and smote them.*" It is not likely that the Israelites came to Mizpeh armed; they must, accordingly, have procured the weapons of those previously slain by the storm.

"*Beth-car,*"—a height on the W. of Mizpeh.

v. 12. "*Shen,*"—W. or S.W. of Mizpeh.

"*Eben-ezer*"=*the stone of help*. It was on this very spot that the disastrous battle had been fought in which the Ark was taken by the Philistines.

v. 13. "*They came no more into the coast of Israel,*"—i.e., they did not come till a considerable time afterwards, their next invasion being early in Saul's reign.

v. 14. "*Amorites,*"—that branch of the tribe that had pushed the Danites out of their territory:—

"And the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountain; for they would not suffer them to come down to the valley: but the Amorites would dwell in Mount Heres in Aijalon, and in Shaalbim." (Judges i, 34, 35).

v. 15. "*Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life.*" His office of judge ceased at the appointment of Saul as king; but his power, though formally abdicated, was still felt and exercised in state affairs. No undertaking could be entered upon without his concurrence. We find him directing Saul what warlike enterprises to proceed with,

and Saul waiting for the prophet to bless him before marching against the enemy.

v. 16. "*Gilgal*,"—in Benjamim. Samuel chose these places as the stations of his circuit because they were old seats of worship.

v. 17. "*Ramah*,"—the same as *Ramathaim-Zophim*.

"*There he built an altar unto the Lord.*" This was contrary to the letter of the Law. But *prophets had power to alter, or dispense with, existing usages*, and the peculiar circumstances of the case justified Samuel. The Ark was at Kirjath-Jearim,—there was no place of resort for worship for the tribes,—Shiloh was, doubtless, desolate,—and there was general religious confusion and anarchy. Samuel, then, as the theocratic guardian of the Law, did not violate its *spirit*, though he did its *letter*, in establishing a species of sanctuary near his own dwelling. Indeed, it would seem that in doing this, and in offering sacrifices, he was acting in accordance with a direct revelation from Jehovah.

CHAPTER VIII.

Samuel appoints his sons Joel and Abiah to aid him as deputy-judges, B.C. 1112.—The people, disgusted by their misgovernment, come to Samuel, and demand a king. Samuel is indignant, and lays the matter before God, who commands him to yield to them, if, after hearing what the manner of the kingdom will be, they persist in their request. Samuel, accordingly, solemnly forewarns them, but in vain. God directs him to give them a king. He sends them away to their homes, B.C. 1095.

v. 1. "*He made his sons judges over Israel.*" They were not independent rulers, but merely Samuel's vice-gerents in the Southern parts of the country, which his infirmities would not now allow him to visit as he had been in the

habit of doing. We find Jair and Abdon also appointing their sons to assist them. The judges, however, had no power to nominate their own children, or anyone else, as *successors*.

v. 3. "*His sons walked not in his ways.*" In spite of the terrible example which had been made of Eli's sons, the judgment upon whom and upon their father Samuel himself had been the means of denouncing, the prophet appears to have erred exactly as the pontiff did. He was, perhaps, not responsible for the wickedness of his sons, but it is clear that he continued them in office after he had learned of their guilty misgovernment. He thus became the indirect means of inducing the people to wish for a king, and so of bringing upon them those burdens which he himself declares, in this chapter, that monarchy will entail upon them.

v. 4. "*All the elders of Israel,*"—the rulers of Israel in their collective capacity, including the Heads of Families and Clans, the Princes of the Tribes, the Genealogists, and the Judges.

v. 5. "*Thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways.*" Here we have *two* reasons urged by the elders for asking a king: a *third* cause is given in Samuel's address to the people in c. xii, 12:—

"And when ye saw that Nahash the king of the children of Ammon came against you, ye said unto me, Nay; but a king shall reign over us: when the Lord your God was your king."

The upshot of the threatened attack by Nahash is related in c. xi.

"*To judge us like all the nations.*" Here the real motive of their desire for a king peeps out,—They desired to look as dignified and important as the nations around them. In the East it is considered far more honourable to have a monarch than not. The Israelites forgot, in their wish to stand well in the opinion of other peoples, and to have amongst them the pomp of a Court, the fact that their glory and security consisted in their *being* unlike other nations.

We find God promising Abraham that *kings* should descend from him,—Jacob prophesied that the *sceptre* should not depart from Judah till Shiloh came,—and Moses had actually left ample directions for the guidance

of the Israelites, when they should desire a king. Hence it is asserted by some, that God had intended from the first to eventually appoint a monarch over His chosen people, and that consequently the only fault of which the elders were guilty was impatience, in not waiting for Jehovah to develop His designs in His own time. But it is impossible, taking this view of the matter, to reconcile the two facts that—

1. God meant the Israelites to have a king.
2. God dissuaded them from having one, and painted to them the evil they would suffer under a monarchy.

The most natural explanation of the matter is, that God never *did* wish the Jews to have any king but Himself; but, *foreseeing* that they would insist upon a monarchy, He wisely and kindly gave full directions to guide their choice, when the demand should be made.

These instructions are found in Deut. xvii, 14-20:—

“When thou art come unto the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that are about me; thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, *whom the Lord thy God shall choose*; one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother.

But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses; forasmuch as the Lord hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way.

Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away; neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold.

And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites; and it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life; that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them; that his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left; to the end that he

may prolong his days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel."

The expression "*whom the Lord thy God shall choose*" in this passage contains the main regulation in connection with the appointment of their king. The monarchy was to be subservient to the Theocracy;—the king was to be Jehovah's viceroy, and to be chosen by Him. The elders, on coming to Samuel, acted according to this direction, not bringing forward anyone chosen by themselves for Samuel to anoint, but applying to God through his prophet to make a king for them.

In fulfilment of this regulation we find Saul, David, and Solomon divinely appointed to the throne, and the succession settled on the descendants of David by God's promise.

v. 6. "*The thing displeased Samuel,*"—because—

1. He regarded it as a direct rebellion against the form of government appointed by God.
2. It appeared to be an insult to himself, and a slur upon the character of his own administration.

v. 11. "*This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you.*" The picture that Samuel proceeds to paint is no doubt a correct description of the way in which the surrounding nations were governed.

"*He will take your sons, and appoint them for himself.*" Nearly all Eastern monarchs can arbitrarily demand the services of any of their subjects, and that, generally, with no remuneration.

"*Some shall run before his chariots.*" Runners in front of and by the side of his chariot were a regular part of a king's or prince's *cortège*. Thus we find Absalom and Adonijah, when aiming at the regal power, preparing "men to run before" them.

v. 12. "*He will appoint him captains,*"—i.e., whether the persons so appointed desired the posts or not.

"*Ear*" = plough, (*Lat.* "*aro*").

v. 13. "*He will take your daughters to be confectionaries, and to be cooks, and to be bakers.*" These are offices peculiarly appropriated in the East to females, and of great importance because of the variety of cakes, confections, and sweetmeats consumed by large households.

The *daily provision* for Solomon's household was "thirty measures of fine flour, and threescore measures of meal,

ten fat oxen, and twenty oxen out of the pastures, and an hundred sheep, beside harts, and roebucks, and fallowdeer, and fatted fowl."

To prepare such a quantity of viands must have required no small number of cooks and bakers.

v. 15. "*He will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards.*" Under Moses, Joshua, and the Judges, the Israelites had been free from all taxes. They are now warned of the heavy imposts that would be laid upon them to support monarchy.

This soon came to pass. David seems to have taxed the nation somewhat heavily, but Solomon's demands upon their resources, to enable him to carry on his gigantic enterprises, and to support his immense and luxurious establishment, were so grindingly oppressive, that at his death they besought Rehoboam, his son, to make their yoke lighter, and, on his refusing, ten tribes revolted, and stoned "Adoram, who was *over the tribute.*"

CHAPTER IX.

The descent of Saul. He and a servant go in search of his father's asses. Not finding them, they go into the city where Samuel is, to ask him concerning them. Samuel, (instructed by God), meets them, feasts Saul, keeps him all night, and in the morning starts with him to see him on his way.

v. 1. "*A Benjamite.*" The *sceptre* had been promised to Judah, and it might naturally be supposed that the first king would be chosen from that tribe. That such was not the case may be accounted for on two grounds:—

1. David, the "man after God's own heart," in whom and his descendants the kingly office was destined to reside, was not yet born.
2. By selecting the first monarch from another tribe the mutual jealousy of Judah and Ephraim, the two great rivals, was not aroused.

That, out of the other tribes, Benjamim should be chosen to supply the king, is to be accounted for by the fact, that

in all Israel Saul was the one man who of all others had those qualifications which would render him acceptable to his countrymen.

v. 2. Saul possessed those bodily advantages which all ancient nations desired in their sovereigns.

v. 4. "*Mount Ephraim*,"—the central range running through this tribe, and extending into Dan and Benjamim.

"*The land of Shalisha*,"—a district N.W. of Benjamim, of which Baal-Shalisha, about 15 miles N. of Lydda, appears to have been one of the chief towns.

"*The land of Shalim*." *Shalim* was probably the same as Shaalbim, a town of Dan. "*The land of Shalim*" would then be the district in which Shaalbim was situated.

v. 5. "*The land of Zuph*,"—the district in which Ramathaim-Zophim was situated.

v. 6. "*This city*." What city this was will be discussed in c. x.

v. 7. "*What shall we bring the man?*" It is the invariable custom in the East for an inferior to offer some kind of present to a superior from whom he is about to ask a favour, or whom he is merely going to visit.

It would appear somewhat extraordinary that Saul should have thought of offering to Samuel first a piece of bread, and, failing that, the apparently paltry sum of $\frac{1}{4}$ shekel. But Oriental usage explains the matter.—As a present of the kind named is a token of respect, it is never refused, however humble it may be, while its character is always determined by the occupation or circumstances of the giver. Thus those engaged in tillage or pasture offer of the produce of their fields or flocks,—merchants, of their peculiar goods,—and artizans, of their handicraft.

Bread would have been considered a suitable present from Saul, as an agriculturist; but, as he had none left, the money, being the *only* thing he had to offer, was perfectly appropriate.

v. 9. was doubtless interpolated by Ezra, who compiled the Canon. We gather from it that the term *Seer* was in Samuel's days applied to those who were afterwards denominated *Prophets*. They appear to have been called *Seers*, because God's special revelations were made to them in *visions* and *dreams*.

The literal meaning of *Prophet* is a *forth-speaker*. The name was given to those formerly called seers, because they

spoke forth the special revelations made to them of God's will and purposes.

v. 12. "*The high place.*" There was, probably, at all the towns which Samuel visited, an altar, where he offered sacrifices. It was customary to erect these on elevated spots.

v. 16. "*That he may save my people out of the hand of the Philistines.*" This seems to have been the one purpose for which Saul was made king, since Jehovah knew that the dynasty was not to be settled in him and his family.

v. 21. "*Of the smallest of the tribes of Israel.*" In B.C. 1406, in consequence of the refusal of the Benjamites to give up the inhabitants of Gibeah to punishment for their murder of the Levite's concubine-wife, the other tribes made war upon them, and exterminated them, with the exception of 600 males. They had, of course, multiplied since then, but their numbers would be even now very small compared with the other tribes. Compare with Saul's answer to Samuel, Gideon's to the Angel of the Lord. (Judges vi. 11-18).

There seems little doubt that Saul understood Samuel's meaning, but shrank, with a modesty that was conspicuous in him before his advancement to the throne, from the honour hinted at.

v. 24. "*The shoulder,*"—the left shoulder, as the right belonged to the priest. The occasion of the banquet was a *sacrificial feast* following peace-offerings.

It was customary to distinguish at table anyone to whom special honor was intended by the large number of dishes set before him, (as in the case of "Benjamim's mess,") or by sending him the choicest portions, as in the present case.

The respect thus publicly shewn to Saul by Samuel would, doubtless, give the guests to understand that he was the chosen king.

"*That which was upon it,*"—probably melted butter, and milk.

v. 25. "*Upon the top of the house,*"—where they slept.

v. 26. "*Called Saul to the top of the house,*"—should be, "*called to Saul on the top of the house.*" Samuel seems to have risen first, to have gone down leaving Saul asleep, and after a while called to him to wake and descend.

CHAPTER X.

Samuel anoints Saul, and foretells three incidents to happen on his way as proofs that he is the chosen king. Events occur as predicted. Saul answers his uncle evasively. Samuel assembles the people at Mizpeh. Saul is chosen king by lot, and brought from his hiding-place; he returns to Gibeah accompanied by a band of men. B.C. 1095.

v. 1. "*A vial of oil.*" The *Holy Anointing Oil* appears to have been employed, as a rule, at the *public* anointing of kings; but on the occasion in the text, and in other cases of *private* consecration, common olive-oil was doubtless used.

The *Holy Anointing Oil* was compounded of Pure Myrrh, 500 shekels,—Sweet Cinnamon, 250 shekels,—Sweet Calamus, 250 shekels,—Cassia, 500 shekels,—and Olive Oil, 1 hin.

Its primary use was to anoint the Tabernacle and its vessels, and Aaron,—and, mixed with blood, to sprinkle Aaron and his sons.

It was afterwards used, as stated above, as the kingly unction.

It does not seem that Saul was ever *anointed*, so that the sacred oil was not poured upon *him*: it was, however, doubtless used at the anointing of David, Solomon, and the Kings of *Judah*.

No one was allowed to make any like it, or use it for any other than the prescribed purpose, on penalty of being "cut off from his people."

Anointing seems to have been symbolical of the pouring out of heavenly graces and gifts upon those undergoing the rite. The act was intended as a solemn consecration to the service of God, and, as such, was perfectly appropriate to the Kings of the Hebrews, since, as God's viceroys, they were invested with a sacred character.

Amongst the Jews, kings and priests, and perhaps prophets, were set apart to their respective offices by this rite.

In the case of the Hebrew Kings, anointing was the principal act of investiture.

There were two kinds of anointing,—one private, by some prophet, which did not confer any right to the throne, but was merely a symbolic intimation that the person upon whom the unction was bestowed should eventually succeed to the throne;—the other public, after the new monarch had been recognized by the people, and generally performed by the High-priest.

Thus, David, though privately anointed by Samuel, laid no claim to the kingdom while Saul lived, and even then waited till called to the throne by the people.

The first king of a dynasty seems to have been anointed for himself and his hereditary successors, with whom the ceremony was not repeated, excepting in case of a disputed or altered succession.

“*Kissed him*,”—as a token of homage and respect,—probably on the forehead.

v. 2. “*Rachel’s sepulchre*,”—near Bethlehem, on the spot where Rachel died after the birth of Benjamin.

This is the proper place to enquire what city it was in which Saul found Samuel.

In c. ix, 6, the servant accompanying Saul evidently speaks of Samuel as habitually residing in the place they were approaching. Now we know that the prophet’s place of abode was Ramah or Ramathaim-Zophim, W. of Jerusalem: and we conclude that it was here he was found by Saul. Against this view it is argued,—“Saul’s home was at Gibeah in Benjamin, N. of Jerusalem: in returning thither he passes by Rachel’s sepulchre S. of Jerusalem: hence the place where he found Samuel must have been S. of Jerusalem, below Bethlehem.” In accordance with this view, some think that it was *not* at Ramah that the seer was, while others are of opinion that he *was* at Ramah, but that that place was S. of Jerusalem, near Hebron.

The difficulty arises from taking it for granted that Saul was going home to Gibeah. A careful perusal of the text shows that such was *not* the case. In v. 8 he is distinctly told to go to *Gilgal*, and there await Samuel. It must also be remembered that it was at *Zelzah* (near Rachel’s sepulchre) that he was to find the two men. Bearing in mind these two points, a glance at the map will show that

to journey from Ramathaim-Zophim, W. of Jerusalem, to Gilgal, past Zelzah, was almost as direct a route as could have been chosen. It may, moreover, be supposed that Samuel *directed* Saul to choose the way to Gilgal that ran S. of Jerusalem, in preference to that on the N., because the latter would lead him near his home, whither he might then have been tempted to return before the solemn dedication purposed by Samuel had been effected.

v. 3. "*Plain of Tabor*,"—should be, "*oak-grove of Tabor*,"—S. of Benjamim,—nothing to do with *Mount Tabor*.

"*Going up to God to Bethel*," &c. Sacrifices seem to have been now offered at all the towns which Samuel was in the habit of visiting.

v. 4. "*Give thee two loaves of bread*,"—a tacit acknowledgment of his authority.

v. 5. "*The hill of God*,"—position uncertain. We read in c. xiii, 3, of a "garrison of the Philistines" in *Geba*, whence some have supposed that this was the "hill of God." But according to our view of Saul's journey, he would not pass near Geba. It would seem more likely that *Gilgal* was the place meant. Wherever the spot was, it evidently took its name from being the seat of one of the prophetic schools. These *Schools of the Prophets* were founded by Samuel at Ramah, Bethel, Mizpeh, and Gilgal. They were fellowships of old, experienced prophets and youthful disciples, to whom the Holy Spirit had been imparted. The seniors were termed "*Father*" and "*Master*," while their pupils were denominated "*Sons of the prophets*." The studies of the latter seem to have consisted of the law, sacred poetry, and music, and they appear also to have kept historical records. From these "*schools*" Jehovah generally chose his prophetic instruments.

"*Psaltery*,"—the first mention of this instrument. It appears to have been a large harp.

"*Tabret*,"—a kind of tambourine.

"*Pipe*,"—a species of flageolet, single or double.

"*Harp*,"—the lyre, probably seven-stringed.

"*They shall prophesy*." The *prophesying* of these students in the schools of the prophets seems to have consisted in singing sacred hymns to instrumental music, while under the influence of the ecstasy peculiar to the prophetic state.

v. 8. We have no record of Samuel's having followed Saul to Gilgal, and offered these solemn sanctifying sacrifices; but there is no doubt he did so, and thus again privately set him apart for the kingly office.

v. 9. "*God gave him another heart.*" This may mean—

1. That God removed his disinclination to the throne.
2. That he had hitherto been a wicked man; but that now a change of heart was temporarily wrought in him.

The latter would seem to be the more correct explanation, if we may judge by the surprise presently expressed by some at *Saul's* being among the prophets.

v. 10. "*The Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them.*" The prophetic transport took possession of him, and, without previous instruction, he was able to join the "sons of the prophets" in their vocal and instrumental utterances.

v. 12. "*Who is their father?*" This has been explained to mean either—

1. "Is not Jehovah the Father of the prophets? Why then is it surprising that even Saul is become one of them?" or
2. "Is not Samuel the father of this school? has not Saul been with him, and is it therefore wonderful that he should have caught the Divine afflatus?"

But it would rather seem to have been spoken in blasphemous mockery. Saul appears to have borne an indifferent character, so that his being amongst the prophets caused the utmost surprise. Some scoffer appears to have replied in substance, "The Devil is the father of all this mummerly. Is it surprising then that such a character as Saul should be found amongst his servants?"

"*It became a proverb,*"—used to express unbounded astonishment at some marvellous news or event.

In c. xix, 24, we find Saul again prophesying, and it is said that this proverb arose from *that* circumstance. There is no contradiction here. The proverb sprang from Saul's *prophesying*, and, if he had done so fifty times, it might be said to have originated with each separate instance, since all would be equally remarkable.

v. 22. "*The stuff,*"—the baggage around the encampment at Mizpeh.

v. 25. "*The manner of the kingdom,*"—i.e., the regulations found in Deut. xvii, 14-20, and quoted before. According to these—

1. The monarch must be chosen by God.
2. He must be a native Israelite.
3. He must, at his accession, make a copy of the Law, to ensure his acquaintance with its statutes.
4. He must not keep large bodies of cavalry for aggressive warfare.
5. He must not multiply wives, gold, and silver.

"*Wrote it in a book.*" He probably wrote out the directions found in the Law, and added to them an account of the circumstances attending the people's request for a king, and the consequent appointment of Saul, together with such safeguards against the abuse of kingly power as occurred to him.

v. 26. "*A band of men,*"—as a body-guard.

v. 27. "*Brought him no presents,*"—the greatest slight that could be put upon a ruler.

P A R T I I.

The Reign of Saul. B.C. 1095—1056, (about 40 years).

Prophets—Samuel and Gad.

CHAPTER XI.

Nahash the Ammonite encamps against Jabesh-Gilead, and offers horrible conditions to the inhabitants. They obtain seven days' respite. The messengers come to Saul. He assembles forces and defeats the Ammonites. He refuses to have his enemies punished. The kingdom is renewed at Gilgal. B.C. 1095.

v. 1. "*The Ammonite.*" *The Ammonites* originally occupied the country north-east of the Moabites. Thence they were driven eastward by the invading Amorites.

They tyrannised over the tribes east of Jordan, and in-

vaded Judah, Benjamim, and Ephraim: Jephthah was raised up to deliver the Israelites from this oppression.

David defeated them, took their capital, Rabbah, and reduced them to subjection.

At the Schism, they recovered their independence, and maintained it, with the exception of three years, during which—after being defeated by Jotham, king of Judah—they were tributary.

When the two and a half tribes east of Jordan were carried into captivity, the Ammonites seized upon the towns of Gad.

At the return from the captivity, they endeavoured to prevent the Jews from rebuilding Jerusalem.

They afterwards passed under subjection to the same nations and rulers as the Moabites,—Judas Maccabeus defeating them in several battles.

Finally, they were absorbed into the Arab tribes.

“*Jabesh-Gilead.*” In consequence of this town having sent no force to aid in the tribal war upon Benjamim, all its inhabitants were slain excepting the marriageable virgins, 400 in number, who were given to the Benjamites as wives. The place had evidently recovered itself in the time of Saul.

v. 2. “*That I may thrust out all your right eyes.*” Josephus says Nahash wished to do this, in order that he might prevent the inhabitants from ever again acting as warriors. Such a mutilation would entirely unfit them for either bowmen or slingers, and as, when they were advancing against an enemy, the shield always covered the left eye, they would be as useless in fight as if they were totally blind.

v. 3. “*If there be no man to save us.*” From their not sending direct to Saul, it would seem that they had not yet heard of his appointment as king.

v. 6. “*The spirit of God came upon Saul.*” This is the only instance in which this is stated in connection with any of Saul’s exploits.

v. 7. “*He took a yoke of oxen, and hewed them in pieces,*” &c. We find the Levite doing the same with the dead body of his concubine-wife murdered by the men of Gibeah. (Jud. xix, 29).

This was evidently a general warlike summons of the same import as the Scandinavian and Highland *Fiery Cross*.

v. 8. "*Bezek*,"—7 miles from Shechem, on the road to Bethshan. Here Judah and Simeon defeated and took Adoni-Bezek. (Jud. i, 4-7).

"*The children of Israel were three hundred thousand, and the men of Judah thirty thousand.*" Comparing these figures, and remembering the large number of the tribe of Judah, it would appear that they did not send their full quota, which would arise from dissatisfaction at Saul's election.

v. 11. The men of Jabesh-Gilead displayed their gratitude for this deliverance, at Saul's death. They went in the night, removed the bodies of Saul and his sons from the wall of Beth-Shan where they had been nailed, burned them, buried the ashes amongst them, and fasted seven days. (c. xxxi, 11-13).

v. 15. "*They made Saul king before the Lord.*" Perhaps he was solemnly anointed on this occasion; but we have no record of the fact. There seem to have been no malcontents amongst the people this time.

CHAPTER XII.

Samuel addresses the assembled Israelites, calling upon them to bear witness to his honesty and uprightness of administration. He recapitulates God's mercy and His judgments towards Israel, according to their conduct, and hence urges the people to obedience. He calls for thunder and rain in harvest, to shew them that they have sinned in demanding a king. They are greatly terrified. He comforts them by the promise of his own teachings and prayers, and of God's blessing if they will follow Him.

v. 1. "*Samuel said unto all Israel,*"—after the events narrated in c. xi, and while they were still assembled at Gilgal.

v. 9. "*Captain of the host of Hazor.*" Jabin, King of Hazor in N. Canaan, oppressed Northern Israel 20 years: Deborah summoned to her side, to deliver the country, Barak, who defeated Sisera, Jabin's chief captain, in the Plain of Esdraelon, Sisera himself being slain in her tent by Jael.

"*The Philistines,*"—under Shamgar and Samson.

"*The King of Moab,*"—Eglon, who oppressed Southern Israel 18 years, and was slain by Ehud.

v. 11. "*Jerubbaal,*" = *trier of Baal.* This was the name given to Gideon, when he threw down his father's altar and image.

Gideon delivered Israel from a seven years' oppression by the Midianites and Amalekites.

"*Bedan.*" The Septuagint has *Barak*, which is undoubtedly right, for there was no judge named Bedan.

"*Jephthah,*"—delivered Israel E. of Jordan from an 18 years' oppression by the Ammonites.

"*Samuel.*" The Syriac and Arabic versions have *Samson*, which is evidently correct, for

1. While Samuel would hardly mention himself thus publicly, he would not pass over such a mighty deliverer as Samson.

2. Samuel had *not* delivered Israel from any of her enemies.

By reading *Barak* and *Samson* for *Bedan* and *Samuel* this list given by Samuel corresponds with that of Paul in Heb. xi, 32:—

"The time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae."

v. 12. We have here stated one great reason why the Israelites desired a king. They learned that Nahash was making preparations for that attack upon them of which the siege of Jabesh-Gilead was the first act.

v. 17. "*Is it not wheat harvest to-day? I will call unto the Lord, and he shall send thunder and rain.*" Wheat harvest began about the middle of May, and was fully over by the middle of June. Thunder and rain during this season were a most extraordinary phenomenon, no rain whatever falling, as a rule, from April to September.

CHAPTER XIII.

Saul dismisses all his troops but 3000 men, 2000 of whom remain with him, and the rest with Jonathan. Jonathan smites the Philistine garrison in Geba. Saul summons the people to assemble for war at Gilgal; the Philistines muster an immense host, and most of the Israelites flee panic-stricken. Saul, tired of waiting for Samuel at Gilgal, has the sacrifices offered on his own responsibility. Samuel arrives, denounces Saul, and leaves him. Saul and Jonathan and their forces go to Gibeah, and remain there watching the Philistines. The Philistines deprive the Israelites of weapons of warfare, and of smiths. B.C. 1093.

v. 1. "*Saul reigned one year*,"—literally "*Saul was the son of a year*."

Two explanations of the expression have been proposed:

1. Some think the clause is intended to state Saul's age at this time, and that the number of years (probably 40) has slipped out of the text.
2. Others regard the words as indicating that the preceding events (in *cs. xi and xii*) occurred during the first year of Saul's reign.

This interpretation seems the right one.

"*When he had reigned two years*," *i.e.*, according to Jewish phraseology, *during* the second year of his reign.

v. 2. "*Chose him 3000 men*,"—from amongst those who had assembled against Nahash.

"*In mount Bethel*," *i.e.*, along the heights intervening between Michmash and Bethel.

v. 3. "*The garrison of the Philistines*." The Philistines had been almost crushed at Ebenezer in B.C. 1120, and the towns they had taken from the Israelites recovered; but

they had now, evidently, recovered themselves, and held positions of importance in the very heart of Benjamin. The unsettled state of the country under the misrule of Samuel's sons had, doubtless, been favorable to their hostile movements.

"*The trumpet*,"—probably the herdsman's horn.

v. 5. "*Thirty thousand chariots*." Allotting two to each vehicle, this gives 60,000 men in chariots, while only 6000 cavalry are mentioned,—whereas in reality the number of the cavalry in ancient armies was always greatly in excess of the chariot warriors. It is, moreover, utterly incredible that the Philistines could have possessed such a host of chariots, since we never read of more than a few hundreds in the largest armies of antiquity.

It would seem that 3000 should be put for 30,000, and even this is such a large number, that some understand that they were 3000 vehicles of *all* descriptions.

"*Michmash, eastward from Beth-Aven*." Beth-Aven was close to Bethel. A glance at the map will shew that Michmash is not due E. of Bethel, but lies below it on the S.E. Hence some have proposed to read *Beth-Horon*, instead of *Beth-Aven*,—Michmash being E. of B.-Horon. But there is no need of any such change. The position of Michmash is quite correctly defined, in the text, according to the peculiar method of topographical notation in use amongst the Hebrews.

In marking the position of a place, they would take the largest neighbouring town, and imagine a line drawn horizontally or perpendicularly through it. If the line were drawn perpendicularly, all places East of it would be said to be E. of the town through which the line was drawn, and *vice versâ*, however far N. or S. it might be. Michmash was E. of a perpendicular drawn through Bethel or Beth-Aven, and was hence said to be E. of Beth-Aven itself.

v. 7. "*The land of Gad and Gilead*." Gad occupied the greater part of Gilead. The expression may mean that they fled to Gad, and to the *other part* of Gilead, (which formed part of Manasseh E. of Jordan); or the words may be taken as a vague expression for the land E. of Jordan generally.

v. 8. "*He tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel had appointed*."

In c. x, 8, we find Samuel telling Saul, after he had privately anointed him,—

“And *thou shalt go down before me to Gilgal*; and, behold, I will come down unto thee to offer burnt-offerings, and to sacrifice sacrifices of peace-offerings; seven days shalt thou tarry, till I come to thee, and shew thee what thou shalt do.”

It is imagined by some that that command referred to the occasion in the text. It is greatly in favour of this view that in the present chapter there is no account of any instructions given to Saul, while those in c. x, are exactly suited to the circumstances narrated as happening at Gilgal. But it is not likely that Samuel would pre-arrange about the offering of sacrifices and the planning of an attack on the Philistines more than a year beforehand, while the connection of c. x, 8, seems clearly to shew that it was a direction to Saul to go *immediately* to Gilgal, that Samuel might come and offer solemn sacrifices of consecration.

It would appear, then, that Saul, having called upon the warriors to assemble at Gilgal, must have sent messengers to entreat Samuel's presence, and that Samuel had sent answer that he would come within seven days, offer solemn sacrifices, and seek Jehovah's guidance in the coming contest.

Samuel could, doubtless, have come immediately; but he was probably divinely directed to delay till the last moment, in order to try Saul.

It is certain Samuel would not break his word, so that we must suppose that though the seventh day had *come*, it had not *passed*, when he appeared upon the scene, though it might be drawing to a close.

v. 9. “*He offered the burnt-offering*,”—not with his own hands it is supposed, but ordered the priests to do so.

v. 13. “*Thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord thy God, which he commanded thee*,”—i.e., the directions given him that he was in all things to be obedient to the will of God, as revealed to him by His ministers. Saul's crime consisted in his losing sight of the fact that he was merely Jehovah's vice-gerent, and acting on his own judgment and will, instead of waiting for revelation from Samuel.

v. 15. “*And Samuel arose, and gat him up from Gilgal*

unto Gibeah of Benjamin." Samuel went away in anger from Saul, and yet the text represents him as going straight to Saul's own city, where he would be sure to meet him, and where we find the king to be in v. 16.

The fact is, there is an omission here, which the Septuagint supplies, making the passage read,—“And Samuel arose and departed from Gilgal. *And the remnant of the people went up after Saul to meet the enemy, going from Gilgal to Gibeah of Benjamin.*”

v. 17. “*Land of Shual*,”—or “jackal-land,”—position unknown.

v. 18. “*Valley of Zeboim*,”—or “ravine of hyenas,”—probably leading to the wilderness of the Jordan.

v. 20. “*Went down to the Philistines*,”—i.e., to their garrisons, in the land of the Israelites, where, doubtless, they kept the captive smiths.

“*Axe*,”—of a heavy kind, used for felling trees.

v. 21. “*Goads*.” The ox-goad is an instrument still used by ploughmen in Syria. It is a long pole, armed at one end with a sharp spike, with which to spur the oxen,—and at the other with a flat piece of iron, (a “paddle”), with which to scrape the earth from the ploughshare.

With one of these formidable instruments Shamgar slew 600 Philistines.

v. 22. “*In the day of battle*” the only weapons available for the Israelites would be bows, slings, bludgeons, and ox-goads.

“*But with Saul, and Jonathan his son, was there found.*” Their immediate followers also must have been allowed to retain their arms, for in c. xiv. we find Jonathan's armour-bearer harnessed, and accompanying his master in an attack upon the garrison of the Philistines.

It appears to have been the general policy of ancient conquerors to deprive the nations they subdued both of weapons and of the means of making them,—e.g., Porsenna made it part of his league with the Romans that they should use iron for only agricultural purposes.

From Deborah and Barak's song we gather that when the Israelites were before oppressed by the Philistines, in the days of Shamgar, they were deprived of weapons:—

“In the days of Shamgar the son of Anath, in the days of Jael, the highways were unoccupied, and the travellers walked through byways. The inhabitants of the villages

ceased, they ceased in Israel, until that I Deborah arose, that I arose a mother in Israel. They chose new gods; then was war in the gates: *was there a shield or spear seen among forty thousand in Israel?*" (Judges v, 6-8).

The Chaldæans also took care to leave no smiths behind amongst the remnant of the captivity.

v. 23. "*The passage of Michmash*,"—a gorge forming part of the road between Geba and Michmash.

The Hebrews appear never hitherto to have been cast into such a distressed, panic-stricken, and abject state. It was, doubtless, "of the Lord" that this visitation fell upon them, as a solemn lesson that the king, whom they had so earnestly desired, was alone helpless to save them, and unable to gain them the proud pre-eminence they coveted amongst the surrounding nations.

CHAPTER XIV, 1-46.

Jonathan and his armour-bearer smite the garrison of the Philistines. A panic seizes the Philistines, who smite one another. Saul, seeing the tumult, asks counsel of God through Ahiah, but, too impatient to wait for an answer, attacks the enemy, who are completely routed, and pursued to Ajalon. The Israelites, in consequence of Saul's rash curse, abstain from food, with the exception of Jonathan, who, in ignorance of his father's oath, partakes of a little honey. The hungry host are with difficulty prevented from eating flesh with the blood, by Saul, who builds an altar. He meditates continuing the pursuit of the Philistines by night, and asks counsel of God, who vouchsafes no reply. He casts lots to discover who has violated his adjuration; Jonathan

is taken; his father condemns him to death, but he is saved by the interposition of the people. B.C. 1093.

v. 1. "*The Philistines' garrison*,"—in Michmash, (see xiii, 16).

v. 2. "*The uttermost part of Gibeah*,"—the northern border of the district to which the town of Gibeah gave its name.

"*Migron*,"—must have been S.W. of Ai, and N.W. of Michmash.

v. 3. "*Ahiah*,"—had succeeded his father Ahitub as high-priest. Some regard Ahiah and Ahimelech as the same; but it rather appears that Ahimelech was brother and successor of Ahiah.

"*The people knew not that Jonathan was gone*." Probably he stole away by night.

v. 4. "*Bozez*"=*shining*,—so called probably from being of white chalk.

"*Seneh*"=*the thorn*. The particular plant indicated by this word is not known. Many suppose it to be a species of hawthorn. Whatever kind of bush is meant, there was probably one of them growing solitarily on the cliff to which it gave the name.

The Philistine garrison was evidently above a gorge running between these two sharp rocks,—Bozez and Seneh.

v. 12. "*We will shew you a thing*,"—spoken with contemptuous bravado.

v. 14. "*An half acre of land, which a yoke of oxen might plough*." The Hebrew literally translated is "*the half of a furrow of a yoke of a field*."

This will bear two constructions. It may mean

1. That the space within which the twenty men were slain was half as much as a yoke of oxen could plough in a day.
2. That the space within which they fell was equivalent to a circle having for its circumference half the length of a straight furrow that a yoke of oxen could trace in one day.

But, taking either of these interpretations, it will be seen that the space indicated would be very extensive, so that twenty men would be a very small number to fall within

its limits, whereas, if there really is an allusion to space at all in the text, its purpose is to shew how quickly and *thickly* the enemy fell.

The difficulty is removed if we accept the Septuagint version, which reads:—

“And that first slaughter, which Jonathan and his armour-bearer made, was about twenty men, *with spears, pebbles, and flints of the field.*”

v. 18. “*The ark of God was at that time with the children of Israel.*” It must have been brought for the occasion from Kirjath-Jearim. Saul seems to have had the same mistaken idea about the efficacy of its presence in the host, that Hophni, Phinehas, and the Israelites had cherished on a former occasion.

Some, however, think this was not *the* Ark, but merely a coffer containing the Ephod, and Breastplate of Judgment.

v. 19. “*Withdraw thine hand.*” Ahiah seems to have been preparing to consult Jehovah by Urim and Thummim, when Saul grew so excited at the increased uproar of battle, that he could not control his impatience sufficiently long to hear God’s will revealed, but bade the high-priest cease his intercession, and attacked the Philistines on his own responsibility, thus committing his second great act of disobedience.

v. 21. “*The Hebrews that were with the Philistines.*”—Probably they were mostly the *smiths*, mentioned before.

v. 24. “*Cursed,*”—i.e., devoted to death.

There were in the Law two kinds of dedication to God,—one redeemable, the other accompanied by a solemn execration, and irrevocable. Inanimate things devoted in the latter mode were burnt by fire or sanctified to religious purposes, while living creatures were put to death. This ban seems to have been intended to affect cities and persons obnoxious, on account of impiety or disobedience, to God’s wrath. It was never meant to be laid upon anyone without Jehovah’s direction, and as Saul acted in this matter entirely without Divine sanction, the act was unlawful, and consequently, not binding. The people were therefore perfectly justified in insisting upon Jonathan not being slain.

v. 24. “*That I may be avenged on mine enemies.*” We have here another proof of Saul’s impiety and presumption. The becoming language to have employed would

have been "That the Lord may avenge Israel on His enemies."

v. 26. "*Dropped,*"—rather "*was dropping.*" The bees' combs would be in the trees and shrubs.

v. 27. "*The rod,*"—a walking staff, or, perhaps, a spear with a wooden shaft.

"*Dipped it in an honeycomb.*" This comb might have been one of those in the trees, or might have fallen thence on the ground.

"*His eyes were enlightened,*"—a remarkably pithy and expressive description of the restorative effects of food taken after a long fast.

v. 31. "*Ajalon,*"—in Dan. This conflict, generally called the *Battle of Michmash*, appears to have taken much the same course as that of *Beth-Horon*, in which Joshua defeated the five kings of Southern Canaan. The Philistines seem to have been driven over the high ground near Bethel, and down the rough descent of Beth-Horon.

v. 32. "*The people flew upon the spoil.*" The evening had come, and they were no longer deterred from eating by Saul's rash ban.

"*The people did eat with the blood.*" In consequence of their being slain "*on the ground,*" the blood could not drain perfectly from the animals, while at the same time the flesh of the beasts would be polluted by the blood in which the carcasses lay.

The eating of blood was strictly forbidden by the Mosaic Law, and had been interdicted to Noah, after the Flood:—

"Flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat." (Gen. ix, 4).

"And whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, that eateth any manner of blood; I will even set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people. *For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.*" (Lev. xvii, 10-12).

The italicised portion of the latter passage gives the double reason for this prohibition.

v. 34. "*Slay them here.*" By slaying the animals on the great stone, (in the manner customary amongst the Jews),

all the blood would be drained from them, and the flesh would be kept from contact with the gore on the ground.

v. 35. "*Built an altar unto the Lord.*" If this were for sacrifices, Saul was not guilty of transgression, since there was now no special sanctuary, while the high-priest was present to officiate. When he offered sacrifice formerly at Gilgal, he did so in direct disobedience to God's will, as revealed through Samuel.

v. 37. "*Saul asked counsel of God,*"—through Ahiah. Saul seems to have been for a time considerably affected by what had occurred at Gilgal, and determined to act in dependence upon God. In this chapter we find him zealous for the observance of the Law concerning eating blood, devout in sacrificing, and twice instructing Ahiah to ask counsel of God, though his natural impetuosity led him on the former of these occasions to break off Ahiah's intercession with Heaven.

"*He answered him not that day.*" We find that when any of the Israelites were guilty of disobedience to any special command of God, He manifested His displeasure by withdrawing His presence and blessing until the criminal had been discovered and punished. Thus, Jericho being devoted to utter destruction by Jehovah's strict injunction, Achan "took of the accursed thing: and the anger of the Lord was kindled against the children of Israel." In consequence, the people were smitten by the men of Ai,—Jehovah revealed the cause to Joshua,—Achan was discovered by lot, confessed his guilt, and was stoned and burned, with all belonging to him.

Saul knew of this incident, and at once inferred that the ban laid by him upon the people had been broken, and that the Divine silence was the consequence of God's displeasure at this breach.

In this he was undoubtedly wrong, for, as has been already stated, the prohibition was not ordered by Jehovah, and was opposed to the Law. Besides, Jonathan did not know of his father's uttering it, and his offence being, consequently, committed in ignorance, he would have been guiltless, even if Saul had spoken by God's command.

If Saul's lofty self-conceit had not prevented the idea from entering his mind, he might have discovered the secret of Jehovah's reticence in his own conduct of the morning,—*he had insulted the Divine Majesty by asking*

counsel, and not waiting for the reply. Now that he again sought advice, no answer was vouchsafed him.

The fact that the lot fell upon Jonathan does not disprove this view, and shew that it was his breach of Saul's command that led to God's silence. Saul jumped at the conclusion that it was owing to some one having eaten that day, and, without enquiring, (as Joshua did *in re* Achan), whether such *were* the case, proceeded to cast lots to find out *who had violated his prohibition.* Accordingly, *we find Jehovah, for his own honour, regulating the "sacred lot" to the discovery of that for which it was invoked,* but not pointing Jonathan out as the cause of His displeasure.

The king's hasty denunciation on this occasion was the cause of a three-fold mischief:—

1. The people, faint for want of food, were unable to continue their pursuit of the Philistines. Had it been otherwise, they might have so crushed them as to have avoided the terrible conflicts they had afterwards to wage with them.
2. The excessive hunger of the host led them into a breach of the Law.
3. Jonathan, though innocent of any fault, was with difficulty saved from death.

CHAPTER XIV. 47-52.

Saul's victories over the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, the Kings of Zobah, the Philistines, and the Amalekites. His family. B.C. 1093-1079.

v. 47. "Moab." The *Moabites* and *Ammonites* were descended from Moab and Ammon, the sons of Lot's daughters.

The Moabites originally occupied the country east of the Jordan and the Dead Sea, as far as the Jabbok.

The Amorites, from the west of Jordan, expelled them from that part of their territory lying between the Jabbok and the Arnon,—which latter river was their northern boundary when the Israelites reached the confines of Canaan. The latter were forbidden to attack the Moabites, because of their near relationship to them; but they and

the Ammonites were excluded for ever from the "congregation" of Israel, for reasons stated in Deut. xxiii, 3,4:—

"An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord; even to their tenth generation shall they not enter unto the congregation of the Lord for ever, because they met you not with bread and with water in the way, when ye came forth out of Egypt; and because they hired against thee Balaam the son of Beor of Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse thee."

David reduced the Moabites to tribute.

After the Schism, they remained tributary to Israel till the death of Ahab, when Mesha, their ruler, rebelled.

Jehoram, Jehoshaphat, and the King of Edom defeated him, and invaded his territory with terrible havoc, as narrated in 2 Kings iii, 4-27.

They do not seem, however, to have been reduced to their former tributary state by this defeat.

They invaded Judah, with the Ammonites and Moabites, to avenge themselves on Jehoshaphat for aiding Jehoram, but were defeated.

Under Jehoash, predatory bands of Moabites made incursions into Israel.

After the two and a half tribes had gone into captivity, they seized upon the territory east of the Jordan, which they had formerly possessed. They afterwards became subject successively to the Persians, Greeks, Romans, the Asmonean princes, and Herod the Great.

Finally, they became absorbed into the Arabian tribes.

"*Edom.*" The *Edomites* were descended from Esau. They settled at first in Mount Seir, where they dispossessed the Horites, but gradually spread over Arabia Petræa from the Dead Sea to the Mediterranean. They were governed at first by "dukes," and then by kings.

The Israelites were commanded to refrain from hostilities with them during their journeys, and when the Edomites refused them a passage through their territories into Canaan, they made a circuit to avoid collision with them.

The present passage is the first record of any war between the two nations. David subdued them, Joab slaying all their males, with the exception of Hadad, a royal prince, who, with some servants escaped into Egypt, returning, however, at the end of Solomon's reign, and exercising independent sovereignty.

At the Schism the rule over Edom remained with Judah.

In the reign of Jehoram they "made themselves a king," and maintained their independence in spite of several defeats, of which the most serious was that by Amaziah, who took Petra.

The Edomites aided Nebuchadnezzar in the siege of Jerusalem, for which they were denounced by the prophets.

The Idumæan Edomites afterwards invaded Judæa, but were first defeated by Judas Maccabæus, and then completely subjugated by John Hyrcanus. When Vespasian threatened Jerusalem, the Zealots invited the Idumæans to aid them; 20,000 of them were admitted into the city, and made horrible havoc, but eventually withdrew, repentant.

The Edomites generally appear gradually to have become lost in the Arab tribes.

"*Zobah*,"—a district E. of Cœle-Syria, and extending towards the Euphrates. David and Solomon both made war with its monarchs.

v. 49. "*Ishui*,"—called *Abinadab* in c. xxxi, 2, and in 1 Chron.

Saul had another son *Ish-bosheth*, (or Esh-Baal), who seems not to be mentioned here, because too young to accompany Saul to battle.

v. 50. "*The name of Saul's wife was Ahinoam*." He had also a concubine-wife Rizpah, by whom he had two sons, Armoni and Mephibosheth.

CHAPTER XV.

Saul commissioned by Samuel to utterly destroy Amalek. He assembles his forces; warns the Kenites to depart from amongst the Amalekites, whom he smites from Havilah to Shur. He spares Agag and the best of the spoil. Samuel accuses him of his unfaithfulness; he prevaricates, but at last confesses his sin. Samuel declares to him

God's rejection of him, and turns to depart. Saul, to detain Samuel, lays hold of his mantle, the rending of which the prophet employs as a figure of the kingdom being rent from Saul. Samuel returns, after earnest entreaty, and sacrifices with Saul; then finally leaves him, returning to Ramah, and mourning for him there.

v. 2. "*Amalek.*" The Amalekites extended from the centre of the Sinaitic Peninsula to the south of Canaan.

It is a disputed point whether or not they descended from Amalek, Esau's grandson.

They were the first nation to attack the Israelites in the course of their wanderings; and this they did in a very cowardly manner; for they "*smote the hindmost, even all that were feeble.*" (Deut. xxv, 18.)

This attack, and their subsequent defeat, are narrated in Exod. xvii, 8-16.

"Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim.

"And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: to-morrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand.

"So Joshua did as Moses had said to him, and fought with Amalek: and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill.

"And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hands, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hands, Amalek prevailed. But Moses' hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun.

"And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.

"And the Lord said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.

"And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah-nissi: for he said, Because the Lord hath sworn that the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation."

They took part in the oppressions of Israel by the Moabites, and by the Midianites.

About twenty years after their defeat by Saul the Amalekites appear to have somewhat recovered this catastrophe, for we find David warring with them, while he was dwelling amongst the Philistines.

The remnant of the nation seem to have escaped to Mount Seir, and the last we read of them is, that these fugitives were smitten, in the days of Hezekiah, by 500 men of Simeon.

v. 4. "*Telaim*,"—in Judah,—called *Telem* in Joshua.

"*Ten thousand men of Judah*,"—see note on c. xi, 8.

v. 6. "*The Kenites*,"—a branch-tribe of Midianites, to which Jethro belonged.

Hobab, Jethro's son, accompanied the Israelites into Canaan, and we meet with his descendants several times in Scripture.

Heber, Jael's wife, was a Kenite; as also were the Rechabites.

The Kenites of the text are not the posterity of Hobab, but the original tribe, who, living in the neighbourhood of the Amalekites, and perhaps in subjection to them, appear to have sent forces to aid against the Israelites.

"*Ye showed kindness to all the children of Israel*." We know that Jethro and his family showed kindness to Moses, and there seems little reason to doubt that the whole tribe, out of regard to Jethro, aided and succoured the Israelites generally on their journey.

v. 7. "*Havilah*,"—a district near the South coast of the Dead Sea. Some, however, place it on the shores of the Mediterranean, S. of the Philistines.

"*Shur*,"—a city on the borders of Palestine and Egypt. Josephus identifies it with Pelusium; but this can hardly be, since the Hebrews called Pelusium, *Sin*. Shur would rather appear to have been near Suez.

v. 11. "*It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king*." Jehovah, speaking after the manner of men, here declares his intention to alter his providence with regard to Saul, in consequence of the latter's disobedience.

This conduct of God was perfectly just and consistent. He had not sworn absolutely to establish Saul on the throne, and the latter having violated the conditions on which he held it, a change of measures was imperative, to vindicate the Divine honor and glory.

In v. 29, it is said of Jehovah, "*He is not a man, that he should repent.*" There is no contradiction in the two passages:—

In the one case God "repents" of a promise *conditionally* made, because the conditions are broken: in the other instance He declares through Samuel his determination, *without any conditions* whatever, to take the kingdom from Saul, and having made this solemn declaration, it would have been impossible for Him to "repent" of it, since to lie is against the Divine nature.

v. 12. "*Carmel*,"—in Judah, between Ziph and Maon. Here Nabal had his possessions.

"*Set him up a place*,"—i.e., erected a triumphal monument.

v. 23. "*Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft.*" There is perhaps here a cutting allusion to Saul's zeal in purging the land of wizards, &c. (c. xxviii, 3).

vs. 27, 28. A somewhat similar incident happened to Jeroboam:—

"And it came to pass at that time when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, that the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite found him in the way; and he had clad himself with a new garment; and they two were alone in the field: and Ahijah caught the new garment that was on him, and rent it in twelve pieces: and he said to Jeroboam, Take thee ten pieces: for thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee." (1 Kings xi, 29-31).

v. 30. "*Honour me now.*" Saul, even at this terrible crisis, thinks more of his own dignity than of his sin and its results.

v. 32. "*Delicately.*"—should be, "*cheerfully.*"

Agag considered that his life was perfectly secure, since the king himself had spared him. He was evidently ignorant of the fact that the Hebrew monarch was not supreme in the State.

v. 33. "*Samuel hewed*," &c. We can hardly suppose the prophet to have accomplished this act himself, as he was a

feeble old man. Doubtless it was done by someone else at his command, and in his presence.

v. 35. "*Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death*,"—though, as we learn from c. xix. 23, 24, Saul went once to seek Samuel.

Saul's conduct in the affair of Amalek was his Third great Transgression, and that which definitively lost him the kingdom. His sin was *disobedience*, to which he added afterwards

1. Hypocrisy and Lying,—in meeting Samuel with a glad assurance that he had fulfilled the commands given him, and in declaring that the sheep and oxen were intended for sacrifice.
2. Mock repentance,—the unreality of which appears from the anxiety he shews to save his pride.

He displayed also the most cowardly meanness in endeavouring to lay the blame of his sin upon the people.

CHAPTER XVI.

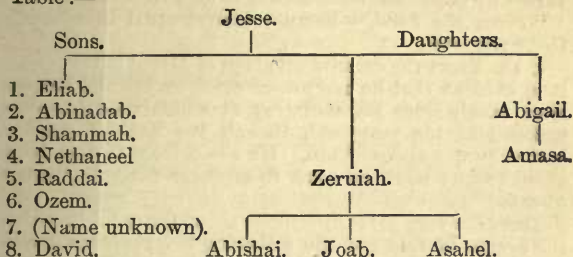
Samuel sent to Beth-Lehem to anoint David, B.C. 1067. Saul being troubled with an evil spirit, sends, by his servants' advice, for David to play on the harp to him. David comes; Saul takes a fancy to him, and makes him his armour-bearer.

v. 1. "*Jesse*,"—the son of Obed, the son of Boaz and Ruth, of the tribe of Judah, from which Jacob predicted the "*Sceptre*" should arise.

Judah had, by Tamar, *Pharez*. The succeeding names in the genealogy, down to Jesse, are *Hezron*, *Ram*, *Aminadab*, *Nahshon*, *Salmon* (m. Rahab), *Boaz* (m. Ruth), *Obed*, *Jesse*.

There seems little doubt, judging by the long period over which these few names reach, that the descent from father to son is not recorded in every instance, but that only the most distinguished individuals are mentioned,—which was a common practice amongst the Jews in recording pedigrees.

The family of David is best shown by the following Table:—



v. 2. "*And the Lord said,*" &c. There was no deceit in this transaction. Samuel was in the habit of sacrificing at different places, and he was merely to take the precaution of covering his true errand by doing that for which he, no doubt, had usually gone to Beth-Lehem.

Having received directions from God to offer the heifer, he could truly tell the elders, "I am come to sacrifice," while he was certainly not bound to tell them *all* his purpose.

v. 4. "*The elders of the town trembled at his coming, and said, Comest thou peaceably?*"—should be, "*The elders of the town hastened to meet him, and said, Thy coming be in peace.*"

v. 5. "*Peaceably,*"—should be "*Peace be to you.*"

v. 10. "*Seven of his sons,*"—with David made eight sons in all. This is the number he is stated in c. xvii, 12, to have had.

In the genealogy of Jesse's family in Chron. only seven sons are named. It is, however, supposed, that eight is the correct number, but that the name of the seventh is not recorded.

v. 11. "*We will not sit down,*"—i.e., to the sacrificial feast.

v. 12. "*Of a beautiful countenance,*"—should be, "*with beautiful eyes.*"

v. 13. "*David = the beloved.*"

v. 14. "*An evil spirit.*" It would scarcely seem that Saul was possessed in the same manner as the demoniacs of whom we read in the New Testament. He appears,

rather, to have been afflicted by a profound melancholy, varied by occasional outbreaks of savage frenzy.

"*From the Lord*,"—because instrumental in effecting God's purposes.

v. 18. From the description given of David in this verse, it is evident that he had grown considerably and become more manly since his anointing, at which time Josephus makes him ten years old, though the general opinion is that he was about fifteen. He would seem to have been about twenty when he went to minister to Saul's "mind diseased."

There are very great difficulties about the order in which the events in this and the following two chapters should be placed. Many authorities put *vs.* 14-23 of the present chapter between *vs.* 9 and 10 of c. xviii, making Saul send for David to play to him *after* the death of Goliath. To this arrangement there are two fatal objections:—

1. In the present chapter Saul's servants speak to him of David as a complete stranger, which they could not have done after the slaughter of Goliath, which made him fully known to the king.
2. In the present chapter Saul is said to have "loved him greatly" when he came to him. This could not have been after the incident of Goliath, for then we find a jealous hatred of David animating Saul, and urging him to attempt his life.

CHAPTER XVII.

The Philistines and the Israelites take the field against one another. Goliath utters a daily challenge to any champion on the enemy's side. David is sent by his father with presents and messages to his brothers in the camp. Goliath stands forth as usual. David expresses his surprise that no one accepts the defiance. Eliab rebukes him. Saul, hearing of David's words, sends for him. He offers to fight the giant. Saul

at length consents, and makes him put on his own armour. David finds it cumbersome, lays it aside, and goes to meet the Philistine armed with only a sling and five pebbles. He slays Goliath, and cuts off his head. The Philistines flee, and are pursued with great slaughter. Saul makes enquiries about David, first of Abner, and then of himself. B.C. 1063.

v. 1. "*Ephes-dammim*," = *the boundary of blood*,"—so called, doubtless, from being the scene of constant battles. We find David encountering the Philistines at the same spot, (1 Chron. xi, 13), where it is called *Pas-dammim*.

v. 2. "*Valley of Elah*" = *valley of the terebinth*.

v. 4. "*Six cubits and a span*,"—about 11 feet, 10 in.

Goliath must have sprung from the Anakim, whom Joshua expelled from Hebron, Debir, and other towns, and who took refuge in Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod.

A brother of Goliath, named Lahmi, was slain in David's reign by Elhanan, (1 Chron. xx, 5). In that chapter and the parallel passage in 2 Sam. xxi, 15-22, we have an account of the slaughter of three other giants, Ishbi-benob, Saph, and another whose name is not recorded who had six fingers on each hand, and six toes on each foot.

v. 5. "*A coat of mail*." The original clearly shews that it was a coat of *scale-armour*.

"5000 shekels" = 2500 ozs.

v. 6. "*Greaves*,"—a kind of boots without feet, extending from knee to ankle, and fastened behind by buckles or straps. They were much on the principle of cricket-pads, and frequently only one was worn, on the left leg.

"*Target*,"—a strip of mail to defend the back.

v. 10. "*Give me a man, that we may fight together*." It was a common and almost universal custom to choose champions to decide national quarrels without the hostile armies engaging. Of this there are numerous instances in history,—that of the Horatii and Curiatii being one of the most remarkable. The practice extended into later times, e.g. it was proposed to decide the dispute between Harold

and William the Conqueror by single combat between the two.

v. 15. "*David went and returned from Saul*,"—after he had, by his music, restored him to comparative health.

v. 16. "*40 days*,"—i.e., a long time.

v. 18. "*Take their pledge*." This "*pledge*" was, probably, some token, corresponding to a modern letter, to shew their father that they were well.

v. 21 seems to shew that the general engagement, from which terror of Goliath had as yet deterred the Israelites, was on the eve of commencing when Samuel reached the camp.

v. 22. "*Carriage*,"—i.e., what he carried.

"*Keeper of the carriage*,"—the officer guarding the baggage.

v. 25. "*The king.....will give him his daughter*." This was a common method of rewarding bravery; thus Caleb gave his daughter Achsah to Othniel, because he smote Debir.

"*And make his father's house free in Israel*,"—i.e., exempt his family from all taxes, and burdens of service.

v. 29. "*Is there not a cause?*" David seems to have meant, "Is it not natural and proper that the breast of every Israelite should burn with indignation at the insults of this Philistine, and with a desire to attack him?"

v. 35. "*Beard*,"—refers to the lion only; perhaps he took the bear by the *chin*, however, where his beard would have been, had the animal possessed one,—so that the word may apply to both bear and lion.

v. 40. "*Sling*." The Jewish sling consisted of a leather thong, or of platted cord, broad in the middle where the stone was fixed, and having at one end a loop to fix it to the hand. After whirling it a few times round the head, the end that was not attached to the hand was let go.

From the narrative of the text, we see the accuracy of aim attainable in the use of this weapon, and are also led to infer that it was commonly used by the Jewish, (as Virgil tells us it was by the Latin), shepherds to guard their flocks.

v. 51. "*David took the head of the Philistine, and brought it to Jerusalem*." This cannot mean that he did so immediately after the fight,—for such a course would have answered no end, since Jerusalem was occupied by the

Jebusites. If there be no error in the text, it would seem more natural to imagine that it is prospective, and relates what finally became of the giant's head, when Jerusalem became David's capital.

"*His tent*,"—probably the Tabernacle he afterwards built at Jerusalem. We find Goliath's sword at the Tabernacle at Nob soon after the events of this chapter.

vs. 55-58. Saul here appears perfectly ignorant of David's person, and yet, according to the order we have followed, he had been formerly his harpist and armour-bearer, and had been greatly beloved by him. This contradiction is, however, only apparent. That Saul should not recognize David may be explained on the ground that at the time that David had ministered to Saul, the latter's mind was in a clouded and unhinged state, so that no distinct remembrance of the youth's image would remain with him.

The Vatican Septuagint gets rid of this difficulty by omitting altogether xvii, 12-31, 55-58, and xviii, 1-5, and thus representing that David did not return home again after once leaving it for Court.

But it does not thus free the narrative from all inconsistencies, nor is the excision approved by the highest authorities.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Jonathan loves David, makes a covenant of friendship with him, and bestows presents upon him. David is promoted. On the return of the army from the field, the women in their songs ascribe greater glory to David than to Saul, who is seized with jealousy, and tries to slay him, but fails, and makes him captain of 1000; deceives him of Merab, but promises him Michal, on condition of his slaying 100 Philistines. David slays 200, and marries Michal.

v 1. "*The soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of*

David." It does not appear whether Jonathan remembered David, or, indeed, whether he had ever been acquainted with him, though the language of this verse seems to imply that he had never before beheld him. If this were so, we may suppose Jonathan to have been absent with the army at the time that David ministered to Saul.

v. 4. "*Jonathan stripped himself,*" &c. Presents of clothes and weapons are always acceptable in the East, and no greater honour can be conferred upon a person than the bestowal upon him by a monarch or noble, of robes, &c., that have been worn by himself. Thus, when Ahasuerus wished to shew how he "delighted to honour" Mordecai, he caused him to ride through the streets clad in the robes "which the king useth to wear."

"*Girdle,*"—more correctly *belt*, or *baldric*. It was generally of leather, studded with metal. If the armour were slight, the belt was broad, and could be girt upon the hips; in other cases it was worn like a scarf, and supported the sword.

The gift of his belt by one warrior to another was a mark of the greatest consideration. When Hector and Ajax interchanged presents, after their fight, the latter gave the former his girdle. (*Iliad*, vii).

v. 5. "*Set him over the men of war,*"—most likely made him what we should call *Captain of the body-guard*.

The advancement of David narrated in this verse doubtless took place in the field, where it is likely that the army remained encamped for some time after Goliath's death.

v. 6. "*As they came.*" The army were now returning from the field, but we do not know what place they were now approaching,—perhaps it was Gibeah, Saul's city, as he would seem to have settled down there as if at home.

"*Came out of all cities of Israel,*"—i.e., all the cities that the victorious troops passed.

v. 7. "*Answered one another.*" The maidens would be divided into two separate lines of dancers, one of which sang antiphonally parallelisms to the words of the other. Thus, in the chorus given in this verse, one rank of virgins sang "Saul hath slain his thousands," and the other responded, "And David his ten thousands."

The song chanted on this occasion is not given; what we have is only the chorus or refrain, which asserts, (with poetic form and license), that David's achievements outdid Saul's.

v. 9. "*Eyed*,"—with suspicious jealousy, and hatred. Having been warned that God had chosen "a neighbour" to occupy the throne which was to be taken from his family, and seeing David so highly favoured of God, he had no difficulty in recognizing in the ex-shepherd Israel's chosen monarch. That he was persuaded of this is clear from c. xxiii, 17.

v. 10. "*On the morrow*,"—after the unlucky song.

"*The evil spirit from God came upon Saul*." His jealous and angry passions being aroused by the late incident, brought on an attack of his old complaint.

"*Prophesied*,"—either as a blind to David, or inspired by unhallowed agency.

v. 11. "*Saul cast the javelin*." According to Eastern usage Saul, by this act, absolved David from allegiance to him.

v. 13. "*Made him his captain over a thousand*,"—thus lowering him in rank, and placing him in a command that would expose him to the chance of being slain in the field.

v. 19. "*Adriel*." His five sons by Merab were afterwards given up to the Gibeonites and hanged by them, (see 2 Sam. xxi, 1-9).

CHAPTER XIX.

By Jonathan's intervention, Saul and David are temporarily reconciled. David defeats the Philistines, and Saul's jealousy is again aroused. He makes an unsuccessful attempt to slay him with a javelin, and then sends men to lie in wait round David's house, and kill him in the morning. During the night Michal effects her husband's escape, and in the morning deceives the messengers of Saul, who is greatly enraged at his disappointment. David goes to Samuel at Naioth. Saul pursues him thither, and is a second time prophetically inspired. B.C. 1063.

v. 12. "*Michal let David down through a window*." So

the spies were let down by Rahab, and St. Paul escaped from Damascus.

To celebrate this deliverance David composed Ps. lix.

v. 13. "*An image*,"—of the *teraph* species.

"*Teraphim*" = *nourishers*.

What *teraphim* really were is doubtful. The general opinion is, that they were tutelary household deities, like the Latin *Penates*, and were supposed to bestow plenty on the families possessing them. Their worship was carried on together with that of Jehovah in households possessing the knowledge of the true God. Of this there is an instance in the case of Laban, whose *teraphim* Rachel stole when Jacob left Padan-aram, doubtless believing that their possession would insure plenty to Jacob's family.

"*Pillow*,"—should be "*net*." The head of the figure was enveloped by a kind of mosquito net, which would effectually conceal it.

v. 15. "*In the bed*." The bed would be merely a padded quilt doubled.

Of this description, doubtless, was the "*couch*" of the *Sick of the Palsy* healed by Christ at Capernaum.

v. 18. "*Naioth*" = *habitations*. It would appear to have been the quarter set apart for the dwellings of the School of the Prophets at Ramah.

v. 24. "*Naked*,"—divested of his armour and upper robes.

It would almost seem as if Saul had come to Ramah determined to destroy Samuel and David; but he evidently departed crest-fallen.

CHAPTER XX.

David and Jonathan hold a private conference near Gibeah, and determine to learn Saul's mind towards David by his behaviour on the absence of the latter at the monthly banquet given by the king. The two friends renew their covenant. At the feast Saul enquires for David on the second day, and, on hearing Jonathan's explanation, is greatly enraged, and hurls a javelin at his son, who com-

municates the result to David. He and Jonathan part. B.C. 1062.

v. 1. "*Came*,"—to Gibeah, Saul's city.

v. 5. "*To-morrow is the new moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king at meat.*"

The *New Moon* was announced by the sounding of the silver trumpets, and celebrated by the sacrifice of eleven victims additional to the daily offerings, and by sacrificial feasts. It appears to have been Saul's custom to entertain his chief officers at this period.

v. 15. "*Thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house for ever.*" David faithfully fulfilled this injunction. He caused Mephibosheth, Jonathan's son, to inherit all the lands belonging to the family of Saul, and entertained him as a prince, at his table,—and when the Gibeonites demanded seven sons of Saul to be delivered up to them, David "*spared Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, because of the Lord's oath that was between them, between David and Jonathan, the son of Saul.*" (2 Sam. xxi, 7).

v. 19. "*When thou hast stayed three days.*" It would hence appear that David *did* actually go to Beth-Lehem.

"*The stone Ezel*,"—near Gibeah.

v. 25. "*Jonathan arose.*" No reason for his rising is given, and the Syriac version which (with Josephus) makes Jonathan sit on one side of Saul, and Abner on the other, seems more correct.

v. 26. "*He is not clean.*" Saul imagined that David had contracted some ceremonial uncleanness, which would necessitate his seclusion till evening.

v. 30. "*Saul's anger was kindled*,"—plainly shewing that his desire for David's presence arose from no affection, but from a wish to find a good opportunity to slay him.

"*Thou son of the perverse, rebellious woman.*" The most venomous and effective style of abuse in the East is to load the female relatives, and especially the mother, of an opponent, with the most abominable epithets.

Though this may appear extremely revolting to us, especially when, as in Saul's case, a man vituperates his own wife, no such feeling exists amongst Orientals, since *no insult whatever is intended by them in such cases to the female abused.*

CHAPTER XXI.

David comes to Nob. Ahimelech gives him shewbread, and Goliath's sword, which actions are seen by Doeg the Edomite. David goes to Achish, king of Gath; is received with suspicion; feigns himself mad; and is allowed to depart.

v. 1. "*Nob*,"—N.E. of Jerusalem, on the ridge of the Mount of Olives. It was not apportioned to the priests by Joshua, and yet it is called in c. xxii, 19, "the city of the priests." Probably, a large number of priests had taken up their abode there.

"*Ahimelech*,"—son of Ahitub, and brother of Ahiah, whom he succeeded in the high-priesthood.

"*Was afraid at the meeting of David*,"—should be "*hastened to meet David*." He had nothing to make him fear, since he thought at first, and all throughout the interview, that David came on Saul's business, and was, therefore, quite unconscious of the risk he ran in succouring David.

v. 2. David's falsehood was most mean, cowardly, and uncalled-for, and brought down fearful consequences on Ahimelech and the priests.

v. 5. "*The bread is in a manner common, yea, though it were sanctified this day in the vessel*,"—should be, "*The bread is in a manner common, especially when this day there is other sanctified in the vessel*."

v. 6. "*Shewbread*,"—literally "*bread of faces*," or "*presence-bread*" (because it was set "before the face of the Lord").

It consisted of twelve unleavened loaves, (one for each tribe), placed, in two piles of six loaves each, on the opposite ends of the Table of Shewbread. It was changed every Sabbath, and the stale bread was to be eaten by the priests alone.

This incident in David's life is alluded to by Christ in justifying His disciples from the charge of Sabbath-breaking brought against them by the Pharisees. The accounts, as given by Matt., Mark, and Luke, of His discourse on that occasion are appended:—

“At that time Jesus went on the sabbath-day through the corn; and his disciples were an hungered, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat. But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath-day. But he said unto them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungered, and they that were with him; how he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shewbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests? Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath-days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless? But I say unto you, That in this place is one greater than the temple. But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath-day.” (Matt. xii, 1-8).

“And it came to pass, that he went through the corn fields on the sabbath-day; and his disciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears of corn. And the Pharisees said unto him, Behold, why do they on the sabbath-day that which is not lawful? And he said unto them, Have ye never read what David did, when he had need, and was an hungered, he, and they that were with him? How he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar the high-priest, and did eat the shewbread, which is not lawful to eat but for the priests, and gave also to them which were with him? And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath; therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.” (Mark ii, 23-28).

“*Abiathar the high-priest*,”—i.e., Abiathar, *who was afterwards* high-priest. Abiathar was Ahimelech's son.

“And it came to pass on the second sabbath after the first, that he went through the corn fields; and his disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing them in their hands. And certain of the Pharisees said unto them, Why do ye that which is not lawful to do on the sabbath-days? And Jesus answering them said, Have ye not read so much as this, what David did, when himself was an hungered, and they which were with him; how he went into the house of God, and did take and eat the shewbread, and gave also to them that were with him; which it is not lawful to eat but for the priests alone? And he said unto

them, That the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath." (Luke vi, 1-5).

v. 9. "*A cloth*,"—probably a gorgeously-embroidered wrapper.

v. 13. "*Let his spittle fall down upon his beard*." The beard is so profoundly respected in the East that a voluntary defilement of this kind on David's part could not fail to be regarded as a clear proof of insanity.

v. 15. "*Have I need of mad men?*" The Rabbins say that the wife and daughter of Achish were mad. This gives force to his question, which, on this understanding, should be read with an emphasis on "*men*."

Pss. xxxiv. and lvi. were written by David to celebrate his deliverance from Achish.

The title of xxxiv. is,—"*A Psalm of David, when he changed his behaviour before Ahimelech; who drove him away, and he departed*."

"*Ahimelech*" here should be "*Achish*,"—or, perhaps, that king bore both titles, the former being a dynastic name.

The title of lvi. is,—"*Michtam of David, when the Philistines took him in Gath*."

From this it would appear that he was for a time a prisoner.

CHAPTER XXII.

David takes refuge in the Cave of Adullam, where he is joined by a band of men; goes to Moab and leaves his parents in care of the king; returns to Judah, by God's direction, and hides in the Forest of Hareth. Saul, in Gibeah, upbraids his followers with treachery, and want of interest in his affairs. Doeg betrays David's visit to Ahimelech. Saul sends for Ahimelech and the other priests, who are all, excepting Abiathar, slain by Doeg, and their city, Nob, utterly destroyed.

B.C. 1062.

v. 1. "*Cave*,"—in the limestone cliffs.

"*His father's house*,"—including, probably, his nephews Joab and Abishai.

v. 2. The character of the band collected round David was the same as that which Jephthah commanded, when he became an exile from his father's house. It was composed of idle, dissolute, and discontented individuals, who gained a livelihood by making predatory excursions against hostile tribes, and levying black-mail on their wealthy countrymen for defending their flocks, herds, and possessions.

This brigand life is not regarded as disgraceful in the East, so long as the robbers do not plunder their own tribe.

"400 men." We learn from 1 Chron. xii, 8-17, that amongst these were eleven Gadites—"men of might,..... whose faces were like the faces of lions, and were as swift as the roes upon the mountains," who swam the Jordan when overflowed,—and men of Benjamim and Judah.

It was, probably, at this time that the following incident occurred :—

"Now three of the thirty captains went down to the rock to David, into the cave of Adullam; and the host of the Philistines encamped in the valley of Rephaim. And David was then in the hold, and the Philistines' garrison was then at Beth-lehem. And David longed, and said, Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Beth-lehem that is at the gate! And the three brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Beth-lehem that was by the gate, and took it, and brought it to David: but David would not drink of it, but poured it out to the Lord, and said, My God forbid it me, that I should do this thing: shall I drink the blood of these men that have put their lives in jeopardy? for with the jeopardy of their lives they brought it. Therefore he would not drink it." (1 Chron. xi, 15-19).

v. 3. "*Mizpeh of Moab*,"—could scarcely be *Mizpeh of Gilead*, as some represent. Its position is not known, beyond the fact that it was somewhere in Moab.

v. 5. "*Gad*," had, most likely, become acquainted with David at Naioth, and had since followed him.

"*The forest of Hareth*,"—near Adullam,—exact position unknown.

v. 6. "*Abode in Gibeah under a tree in Ramah*,"—is nonsense, for he could not be in Gibeah and in Ramah

simultaneously. It should be,—“*was sitting on a hill in Gibeah under a tamarind tree.*”

“*Spear,*”—as a sceptre.

vs. 7, 8. “*Ye Benjamites,.....have conspired against me.*”

See note on v. 2.

v. 9. “*Doeg the Edomite,*”—must have been a proselyte.

v. 13. “*Hast enquired of God for him.*” It does not appear from the narrative of David’s visit that this occurred; and Ahimelech’s reply in v. 15. “*Did I then begin to enquire of God for him?*” may be taken as a denial that it happened.

If Ahimelech *did* enquire of God (i.e., regarding the success of the enterprise on which David was entering) it was in the belief that, as he had falsely asserted, David was on Saul’s business.

v. 15. “*Thy servant knew nothing of all this,*”—i.e., of the feud between Saul and David.

v. 18. “*That did wear a linen ephod,*”—i.e., ordinary priests. The whole number slain then, including Ahimelech, was 86.

v. 19. In this terrible catastrophe was fulfilled part of the curse pronounced on Eli and his house.

v. 20. “*Abiathar escaped, and fled after David,*”—whom he found at Keilah. (c. xxiii, 6).

Ps. lii, cxl, and cxliii, were composed by David on the occasion of the slaughter of the priests.

CHAPTER XXIII.

David, after asking counsel of God, delivers Keilah from the Philistines, and then leaves the town, because it is revealed to him that the inhabitants will deliver him up to Saul. He dwells in the Wilderness of Ziph, where he and Jonathan renew their covenant. The Ziphites betray David’s whereabouts to Saul, who thereupon pursues him, but finds him removed; yet he is close upon him, when an invasion of the Philistines calls him off. David removes to Engedi. B.C. 1061.

v. 1. “*They rob the threshing floors,*”—see note on xxii, 2.

v. 2. "*Inquired of the Lord*,"—through Abiathar, who, (v. 6) brought the ephod, and, doubtless, the breastplate, with him. Thus Saul's slaughter of the priests was most advantageous to David, since it threw into his hands the means of consulting Jehovah by Urim and Thummim.

v. 13. "600,"—an increase since Adullam.

v. 14. "*Wilderness of Ziph*,"—between Ziph and Carmel (in Judah).

v. 18. "*Made a covenant*,"—for the third time. This was their last interview.

v. 19. "*The hill of Hachilah*,"—must have been in the Wilderness of Ziph.

"*Jeshimon*,"—was, according to Jerome, 10 miles S. of Jericho, near the Dead Sea.

v. 24. "*Wilderness of Maon*,"—to the S. of Maon.

v. 28. "*Sela-Hammahlekoth*"=*the cliff of divisions*, (because it divided Saul from David).

v. 29. "*Engedi*,"—originally called *Hazon-Tamar*.

Ps. liv. was composed by David when betrayed by the Ziphites.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Saul falls into David's power in a cave at Engedi.

He cuts off the skirt of the king's robe, but saves his life. Saul acknowledges his wickedness; declares his knowledge that David will be king; pledges him not to cut off his seed, and returns home. B.C. 1061.

v. 3. "*Sheepcotes*,"—caves, commonly used by shepherds to shelter their flocks.

"*Saul went in*,"—apparently alone.

"*To cover his feet*,"—to take his *siesta* in the heat of the day.

"*The sides of the cave*,"—hidden either in the obscurity of the back part of the cavern, or in inside apartments, of which there were frequently several in these caves.

v. 4. "*Behold, I will deliver thine enemy*," &c. This was a version of God's promises to David garbled and misrepresented with a view to so work upon his feelings as to induce him to slay Saul with an apparently just pretext.

v. 14. "*A flea*,"—should be, "*a single flea*."

Ps. lvii. was composed by David on this occasion.

CHAPTER XXV.

Samuel dies. David removes to the Wilderness of Paran; sends to ask provision from Nabal; is refused with insults; prepares to avenge himself. Abigail, Nabal's wife, meets him with presents, and appeases him; Nabal dies, and David marries Abigail. B.C. 1060.

v. 1. "*Samuel died.*"

LIFE OF SAMUEL.

Son of Elkanah and Hannah.

B.C.

1171. Born.

1159 (?). Receives his first revelation from God,—concerning Eli and his sons.

1141. Eli and sons die,—Ark taken,—Samuel succeeds to judgeship.

1120. Samuel assembles the people at Mizpeh,—a national humiliation is celebrated,—Philistines defeated at Ebenezer.

1112. Appoints his sons as assistants.

1095. Anoints Saul, and makes him king at Mizpeh,—renews the kingdom at Gilgal.

1093. Reproves Saul for offering sacrifice at Gilgal.

1069. Reproves, and finally leaves Saul, for not completely destroying Amalek.

1067. Anoints David.

1060. Dies.

(Appeared after death to Saul, B.C. 1056).

v. 1. "*The wilderness of Paran,*"—S. and S.E. of Simeon.

v. 2. "*Carmel,*"—in Judah. It appears here to indicate a district so named, which probably extended from the town of Carmel to the Desert of Paran.

"*Shearing his sheep,*"—a time of great festivity.

v. 3. "*Caleb*" = a dog; hence "*of the house of Caleb*" may be here rendered "*of the house of the dog,*"—i.e., of a snarling, dog-like disposition.

v. 7. It has been already stated that such bands as David's expected rewards from the wealthy for protecting their flocks, &c.

v. 10. "*The son of Jesse*,"—spoken contemptuously. Saul and Doeg mention David by the same title.

v. 11. "*Bread*," "*Water*,"—i.e., meat and drink generally.

v. 13. "*Stuff*,"—baggage.

v. 24. "*At his feet*,"—should be, "*on his feet*." David would remain mounted, while Abigail, having alighted, bent down, and took hold of his feet, to kiss them.

v. 25. "*Nabal*" = *fool*.

Abigail's estimate of her husband, translated into proverbial English, is,—"*He is fool by name, and fool by nature*."

v. 29. "*Bound in the bundle of life*,"—i.e., safely preserved.

v. 38. "*The Lord smote Nabal*." This does not mean that God cut him off in punishment for his churlish conduct to David. It is merely a form of expression commonly employed to describe *sudden* death; compare our verdict, "*Died by the visitation of God*." Nabal's death seems to have been caused by the shock of his wife's intelligence coming upon him when in a nervous state after heavy drinking.

v. 43. "*Jezreel*,"—in Judah.

CHAPTER XXVI.

The Ziphites again reveal David's whereabouts to Saul, who goes in pursuit of him. David steals into the king's encampment by night; prevents Abishai from slaying Saul; takes away the latter's spear and cruse; calls to Abner from a distant hill. Saul recognizes his voice, and expresses deep sorrow for his persecution of David. B.C. 1060.

v. 3. "*David abode in the wilderness*." He seems to have left the hill to Saul, and to have retired to the low ground, where he would be concealed by the woods.

v. 5. "*Abner*" = *son of Ner*. Ner was father of Kish,—consequently, Abner and Kish were brothers, and *Abner was Saul's uncle*. By some he is represented as Saul's *cousin*.

"*In the trench*,"—should be, "*in the midst of the baggage*." The encampment would be circular,—Saul's tent would occupy the place of honour in the centre,—round it the baggage would be heaped as a kind of fortification, and outside this again the king's followers would repose.

v. 7. "*His spear stuck in the ground*,"—the mark by which the chief's tent is still distinguished in the East.

The spears of the Hebrews had spikes at the butt-end for the purpose of planting them in the earth. It was with this sharp end that Abner smote Asahel, as he was pursuing him, backwards.

"*Bolster*,"—should be, "*head*." It is not likely that Saul would indulge in the luxury of a bolster when in the field. They seem at this time to have been used only in cases of sickness.

v. 11. "*Cruse*,"—a pitcher, (Fr. *cruche*). This placing water at the bedside is quite in accordance with Eastern custom, a great deal being usually drunk during the night.

v. 20. "*Partridge*,"—perhaps the Barbary partridge.

v. 25. "*David went on his way, and Saul returned to his place*." This was their last earthly meeting.

CHAPTER XXVII.

David again flees to Achish, who receives him favourably, and gives him Ziklag. David attacks and spoils the Geshurites, and other tribes, and represents to Achish that he has been making war against his own nation.
B.C. 1058.

v. 3. "*David dwelt with Achish*." Achish received David very differently on this second occasion of his coming, because he had a large force and a great reputation, and the king of Gath thought he could use him to fight his battles, (see v. 12).

v. 6. "*Ziklag*,"—had been first given to Judah, and then to Simeon; but, apparently, the Israelites had never taken possession of it.

"*Pertaineth unto the kings of Judah unto this day*." Some have argued that these words must have been added after the Schism, and that, consequently, the book was

written after that event; but the inference is not just, since Ezra, or someone else, might have interpolated the words.

It would seem, however, that the meaning is merely that Ziklag, having been presented to David, became a royal city, belonging to David and those that might succeed him as rulers over the territory of Judah (and Simeon).

We learn from 1 Chron. xii, 1-7, that a large number of valiant ambidextrous Benjamites joined David at Ziklag.

v. 8. "*Geshurites*,"—S. of the Philistines. There was a tribe of the same name in Northern Palestine.

"*Gezrites*,"—not the inhabitants of Gezer, which was in Ephraim. We have no information concerning the tribe, though some suppose them to have been the same as the Gerrhenians, whom Strabo places between Gaza and Pelusium.

v. 10. "*Jerahmeelites*,"—a family of Judah, Jerahmeel being Judah's great-grandson.

"*The south of the Kenites*." The Kenites descended from Hobab dwelt near Jericho at their first coming into Canaan; they afterwards threw in their lot with Judah and Simeon, and dwelt among them in the "wilderness of Judah." (Jud. i, 16).

David induced Achish to believe that his expeditions were against his own countrymen of Judah, and their friends the Kenites.

CHAPTER XXVIII, 1-4; XXIX.

The Philistines assemble their armies against Israel in the Plain of Jezreel; Saul pitches in Mount Gilboa. David accompanies Achish, but is compelled to return to Ziklag, by the influence of the other "princes of the Philistines." B.C. 1056.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

v. 2. "*Surely thou shalt know what thy servant can do*." This was not a direct promise to aid the Philistines in the coming engagement, but an evasive reply, intended to gain time. David was in a terrible dilemma, out of which God mercifully delivered him. It would appear, indeed, that

he had committed himself to the Lord, and accompanied Achish with the persuasion that a way of escape would be made for him.

"Keeper of mine head,"—probably captain of his life-guard. In Eastern parlance "the head" is equivalent to "the life," being regarded as the principal part of the body.

v. 3. *"Wizards,"*—those who pretended, by means of magical arts, to reveal secrets, discover things lost, find hidden treasure, and interpret dreams.

"Saul had put away." In thus acting, he had obeyed the Law:—

"When thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord: and because of these abominations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee. Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord thy God. For these nations, which thou shalt possess, hearkened unto observers of times, and unto diviners: but as for thee, the Lord thy God hath not suffered thee so to do." (Deut. xviii, 9-14).

His motive in thus cleansing the land of all diviners is open to suspicion. It is most likely that he expelled them either because they had been foretelling the evils to come upon him, or because he thought that the "evil spirit" which vexed him had been sent by them.

There is no necessity here to discuss the difficult question as to whether the professors of magic in its various forms were all pretenders. It is sufficient to state that the general opinion is that they were. The reason that the Divine Law took cognizance of them would then be, that the mischief arising from the pretention to these arts was as great as if they had been realities, and, at the same time, they all, more or less, involved idolatry.

v. 4. *"Shunem,"*—on the Southern slope of Little Hermon: Saul pitched just opposite the Philistines, on the slope of Gilboa.

CHAPTER XXIX.

v. 1. *"A fountain which is in Jezreel,"*—probably the

Spring of Harod, where Gideon's men were tried, and 300 chosen, because they lapped.

"*The princes of the Philistines*,"—probably the other four "lords" of the Philistines.

On David's way to Aphek, he was joined by seven valiant Chiefs of Manasseh. (1 Chron. xii, 19-21).

CHAPTER XXX.

During David's absence, the Amalekites invade Southern Palestine, burn Ziklag, and carry away all the women, children, and property of David and his band. David goes in pursuit; overtakes them; smites all but 400; recovers all the persons and goods; takes large spoil in addition; sends presents to the elders of several cities. B.C. 1056.

v. 1. "*And Ziklag*,"—in revenge for David's attacks on them (c. xxvii, 8).

v. 2. "*They slew not any*,"—because all the men of war were absent.

v. 9. "*The brook Besor*,"—rises near Hebron, and flows into the Mediterranean, S. of Gaza.

v. 13. "*Servant*,"—slave: he had, probably, been captured on the occasion of an incursion into Egypt.

v. 14. "*Cherethites*,"—probably a Philistine tribe.

"*The South of Caleb*." Caleb's portion was Hebron and neighbourhood.

v. 26. "*Friends*,"—during his wanderings.

v. 28. "*Aroer*,"—another name for *Adamah* in Judah.

v. 29. "*Rachal*,"—nowhere else mentioned,—position unknown.

v. 30. "*Chor-Ashan*,"—*Ashan*, in Simeon.

"*Athach*,"—nowhere else mentioned,—position unknown.

CHAPTER XXVIII, 5-END.

Saul, in his terror, applies to the "*Witch of Endor*"; his death is foretold. B.C. 1056.

v. 7. "*A woman that hath a familiar spirit*,"—should be, "a woman, a mistress of Ob."

"Ob" was the name given to the spirit or demon with which communication was supposed to be held. Its meaning is "*bottle*," and it was applied to these demons because they were supposed to inflate the stomach until it swelled out like a skin bottle, and to speak the oracle thence with a deep, sepulchral voice.

It was in this manner that the Pythonesses or priestesses of Apollo delivered his oracles. They professed to inhale inspiring vapour from a hole in the ground until they were sufficiently inflated by the spirit to utter responses.

Saul applies to this woman to do two things in v. 8:—

1. To "divine by the familiar spirit."
2. To "bring up whom" he should tell her.

It would hence appear that she not only professed familiarity with an Ob-demon, but also *necromancy*, or the power of revealing secrets by consulting the dead. Indeed, it would seem probable that sorcerers and sorceresses of those days professed every branch of the art.

"*At Endor.*" It is thought by some that she lived in one of the dark caves common in the neighbourhood. This is very probable, since, in consequence of Saul's severe measures, she would scarcely reside in the town. Her cave is even now pointed out.

v. 12. "*When*" has no business in the text. It should read,—"*And the woman saw Samuel, and she cried with a loud voice.*"

v. 13. "*Gods*" = great ones.

v. 14. "*Samuel.*" A most important word is here omitted. It should be "*Samuel himself.*"

v. 17. "*To him,*"—should be, "*for Himself.*"

v. 19. "*Be with me,*"—in Hades.

Three views are taken of this narrative:—

1. That the woman by her arts induced Satan, or some other demon, to personate Samuel.

This is absurd, for it attributes to Satan the marvellous power of assuming or granting a corporeal form.

2. That the whole affair was a mere deception on the woman's part, Saul seeing nothing, but trusting to her statement of what she professed to see.

Those who uphold this view say that the woman knew Saul by his height, and by his declaration to her that she had nothing to fear,—that she was

acquainted with Samuel's figure, and could, therefore, easily describe it,—that the voice was produced by ventriloquism, or by the connivance of a confederate (perhaps one of Saul's two companions),—and that her crying out in apparent terror was only a trick to impose on Saul.

3. That, contrary to the woman's expectations, Samuel himself appeared, before she had time to perform any incantations.

This seems the correct view,—for two reasons mainly:—

- (1). The woman suddenly cries out at seeing Samuel, which vision was quite unexpected according to the correct reading of v. 12.
- (2). In v. 14, it is distinctly stated that it was "Samuel himself."

That Saul, as well as the woman, saw Samuel, is distinctly stated in this verse,—"*Saul perceived that it was Samuel himself.*"

The purposes served by this appearance of Samuel were threefold:—

1. It made Saul's crime the instrument of his punishment, in the denunciation of doom uttered by Samuel.
2. It proved the superiority of Jehovah to the pretended power of the diviners.
3. It proved the existence of a future state.

CHAPTER XXXI.

The Battle of Mount Gilboa. Saul and three of his sons slain. Their bodies are fastened to the wall of Beth-Shan, and rescued thence by the men of Jabesh-Gilead.
B.C. 1056.

v. 3. "*And the archers hit him ; and he was sore wounded,*"—may be read, "*And the archers overtook him, and he was sore afraid.*"

v. 4. "*A sword,*"—perhaps that of his armour-bearer.

v. 5. "*His armour-bearer,*"—probably Doeg. The Jews say that the sword on which Saul and Doeg fell was the one with which the latter had slain the priests.

The account given to David of Saul's death by the young Amalekite differs from that in this chapter:—

“Now it came to pass after the death of Saul, when David was returned from the slaughter of the Amalekites, and David had abode two days in Ziklag; it came even to pass on the third day, that, behold, a man came out of the camp from Saul with his clothes rent, and earth upon his head: and so it was, when he came to David, that he fell to the earth, and did obeisance. And David said unto him, From whence comest thou? And he said unto him, Out of the camp of Israel am I escaped. And David said unto him, How went the matter? I pray thee, tell me. And he answered, That the people are fled from the battle, and many of the people also are fallen and dead; and Saul and Jonathan his son are dead also. And David said unto the young man that told him, How knowest thou that Saul and Jonathan his son be dead? And the young man that told him said, As I happened by chance upon mount Gilboa, behold Saul leaned upon his spear; and, lo, the chariots and horsemen followed hard after him. And when he looked behind him, he saw me, and called unto me. And I answered, Here am I. And he said unto me, Who art thou? And I answered him, I am an Amalekite. He said unto me again, Stand, I pray thee, upon me, and slay me: for anguish is come upon me, because my life is yet whole in me. So I stood upon him, and slew him, because I was sure that he could not live after that he was fallen: and I took the crown that was upon his head, and the bracelet that was on his arm, and have brought them hither unto my lord.” (2 Sam. i, 1-10).

It must be remembered that this account was given to David by the Amalekite with a view to gaining his favour,—consequently we must regard it as false, and the one in the present chapter as correct.

v. 10. “*His body*,”—and those of his sons, (v. 12).

v. 11. “*Jabesh-Gilead*.” The men of this town thus shewed their gratitude to Saul for delivering them from Nahash,—his first act as king.

v. 12. “*The wall*,”—above the gate.

“*Burnt them*,”—the first mention of this method of sepulture in the Bible. It was probably resorted to to preserve the bodies from further insult.

For this act of gratitude David warmly thanked the men of Jabesh. (2 Sam. ii, 5-7).

David afterwards removed the bones of Saul and his sons from Jabesh, and buried them in Zelah, in the sepulchre of Kish, together with the remains of the children of Rizpah and Merab, slain by the Gibeonites. (2 Sam. xxi, 12-14).

LIFE OF SAUL.

Son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin.

B.C.

- 1095. Israelites desire a king,—Saul goes to seek his father's asses,—anointed by Samuel,—chosen king at Mizpeh. Defeats Nahash at Jabesh-Gilead, (first kingly act).
- 1093. Offers sacrifice at Gilgal,—Battle of Michmash,—Saul's rash curse nearly costs Jonathan his life.
- 1093-1069. Defeats Moabites, Edomites, Kings of Zobah, and Amalekites.
- 1069. Commissioned to destroy Amalek,—spares Agag and the best of the flocks and herds,—finally left by Samuel.
- 1063. Afflicted with melancholy,—sends for David, who restores him by his music, and returns home,—Goliath slain and Philistines defeated,—Saul becomes jealous of David, and tries to kill him,—removes him from his presence, and gives him Michal for wife,—Endeavours to slay him at his own house.
- 1062. Massacres the priests at Nob.
- 1061. Has his life spared at Engedi.
- 1060. Has his life spared at the Hill of Hachilah.
- 1056. Philistines assemble at Aphek,—Saul consults "witch of Endor,"—slain, with his sons, at the Battle of Gilboa.

Saul's three great offences were:—

1. Offering sacrifice at Gilgal, contrary to God's command uttered through Samuel to wait for the latter.
2. Sparing Agag and the best of his flocks and herds.
3. Consulting the "witch of Endor."

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THE END.

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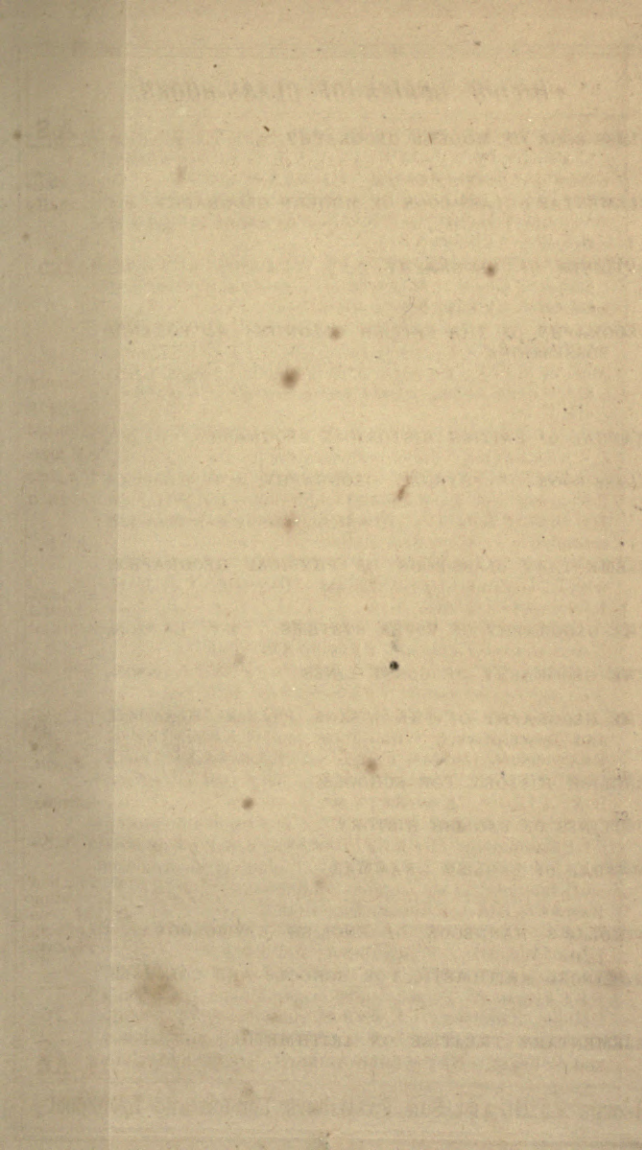
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